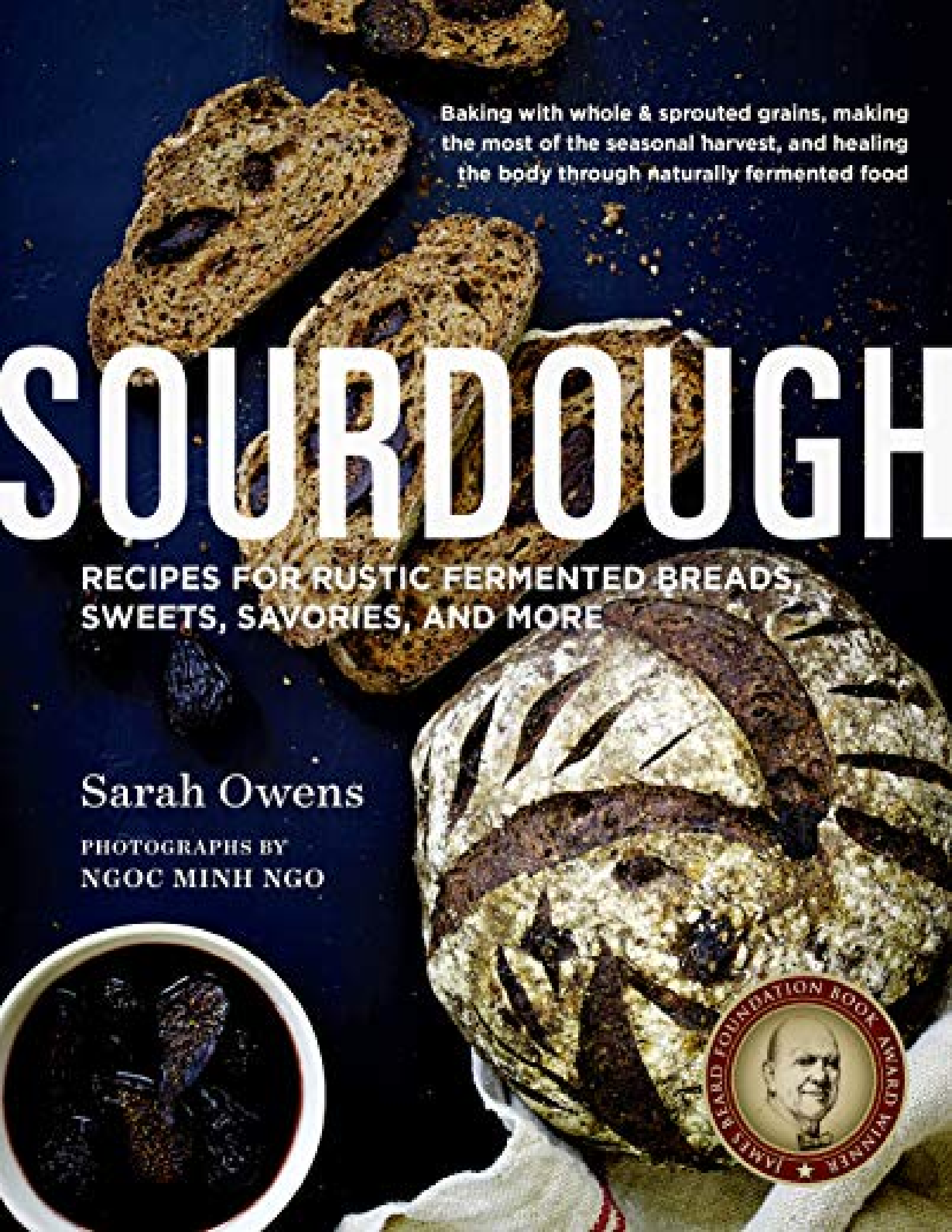
Baking with whole & sprouted grains, making the most of the seasonal harvest, and healing the body through naturally fermented food
SOURDOUGH
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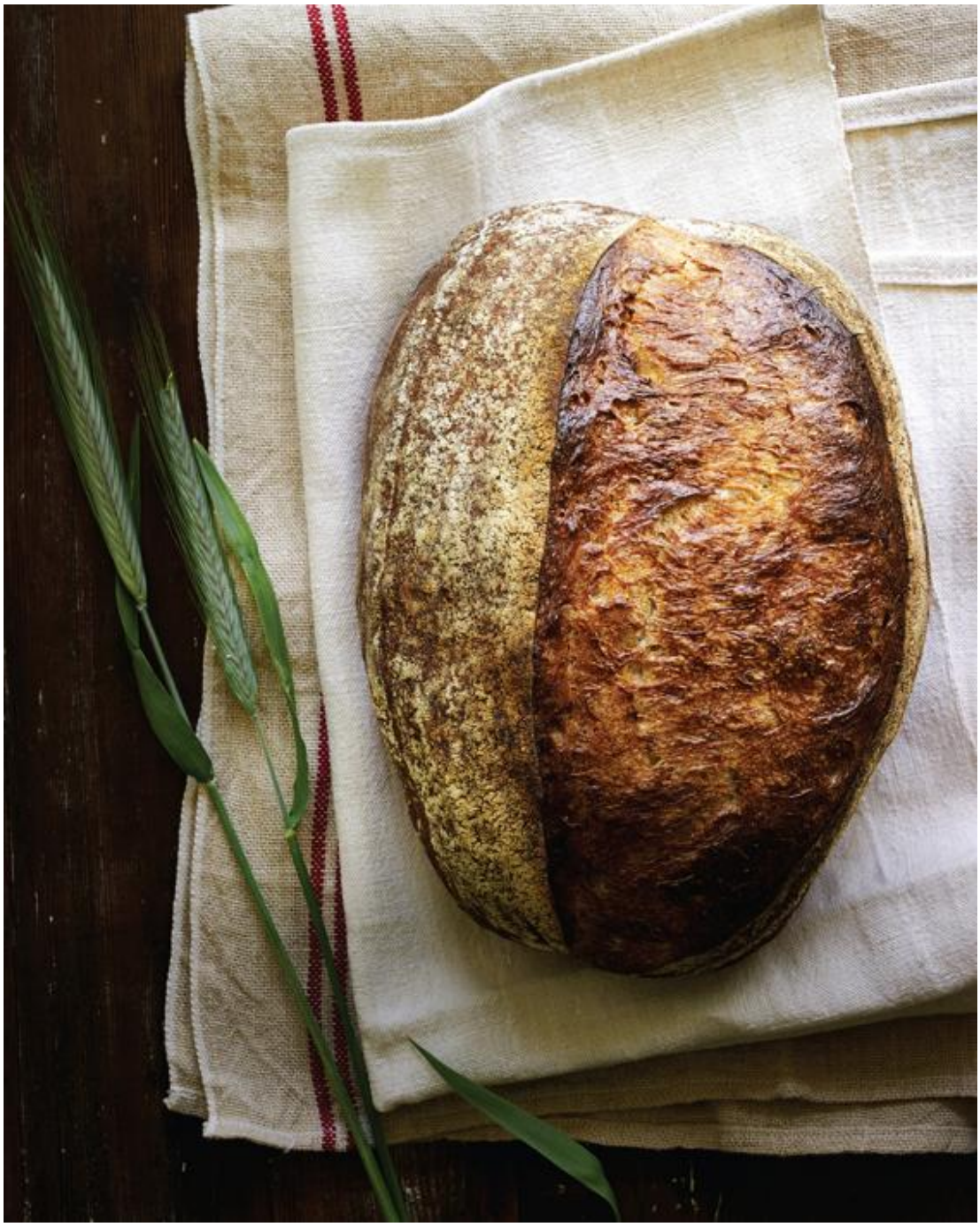
Sarah Owens
PHOTOGRAPHS BY NGOC MINH NGO
JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION BOOK AWARD WINNER



SOURDOUGH

Recipes for Rustic Fermented Breads, Sweets, Savories, and More

Sarah Owens

Photographs by Ngoc Minh Ngo

Roost Books
Boulder
2015

This book is not intended to be a substitute for the medical advice of physicians, especially with respect to symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention. The reader should consult a physician in all matters related to his or her health.

Roost Books
An imprint of Shambhala Publications, Inc.
4720 Walnut Street
Boulder, Colorado 80301
roostbooks.com

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Photographs © 2015 Ngoc Minh Ngo
Cover design by Jennifer Muller & Daniel Urban-Brown
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Roost Books is distributed worldwide by Penguin Random House, Inc., and its subsidiaries.

Book designed by Jennifer Sarah Muller adapted for ebook

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Owens, Sarah, 1978–
Sourdough: recipes for rustic fermented breads, sweets, savories, and more/Sarah Owens; photographs by Ngoc Minh Ngo.—First edition.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-61180-238-2 (hardcover: alk. paper)
eISBN 9780834843332
1. Sourdough bread. 2. Baking. 3. Seasonal cooking. 4. Cooking (Sourdough) I. Title.
TX770.S66O94 2015
641.81′5—dc23
2014039196

a_prh_5.6.0_c0_r0

Dedicated to the memory of my grandmothers,
who taught me to cook from the garden and forage
from the land.

Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Part One: The Sourdough

1 | Kitchen Notes

An Artisan's Toolbox

Terminology

Techniques

Garden Notes

2 | Stocking the Pantry

Produce and Meat

Grains and Flour

Nuts and Seeds

Salt

Water

Spices

Sugar and Other Sweeteners

Fats and Oils

Dairy and Eggs

Herbs

Edible Flowers

3 | Sourdough Primer

What Is Sourdough and Why Use It?

Inspired Living

Scheduling Sourdough in the Kitchen

Primordial Beginnings: Culturing Microbes

Part Two: The Recipes

4 | Autumn Harvest

recipes for the bounty of the growing season and the return of cool nights

5 | Winter Dormancy

recipes for warming the hearth, nourishing the body, and turning inward

6 | Spring Rebirth

recipes for new growth, awakening the senses, and the return of green

7 | Summer Sun Worship

recipes for abundance, fruition, and long sunny days

Resources

Index

About the Author and the Photographer

E-mail Sign-Up

Acknowledgments

My thanks go to Jeanne Rostaing and Marie Viljoen, whose articles on *Gardenista* and in *Edible Brooklyn* respectively spread the word about sourdough fermentation. Their writing caught the attention of my resourceful and intrepid agent, Coleen O'Shea, who is unfailingly available for career advice and a hearty chuckle. At Roost Books, to my editors Rochelle Bourgault and Julia Gaviria, who made sense of my text and recipes and whose gentle editing helped to shape my literary voice.

To my parents, who gave me a rich upbringing and encouraged exploration of nature in all its muddy iterations. Being grounded to the rose garden or bean patch eventually paid off! To Boshko Boskovic and my many close friends (extended family) who have investigated the beauty and tenderness of a creative life with me, even when a bit unconventional.

At the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Mark Fisher, the director of horticulture. His enthusiasm and support allowed my sense of curation and garden design to develop through liberal cultivation of the Cranford Rose Garden. To the Horticulture staff who tasted and tested every single recipe more than a few times with exuberant applause—even when they were duds. To Publications, Interpretation, and Marketing for always being curious beyond the superficial beauty of roses. And to Human Resources for tolerating my long absences during the development of this manuscript and who always wanted more bread.

To Miriam and Gregg Weiner, the original founders of the Greenwood Heights CSA, who took the chance and allowed me to bring wholesome loaves to our Brooklyn neighborhood. It was through the loyal subscribers of this CSA that I honed the skills to bake good bread. To my friends, neighbors, and landlords Dan and Cindy Menz-Erb, who never uttered a peep about the clouds of flour wafting downstairs from my top-floor apartment.

For all the ace bakers who have devoted their lives to the craft and have shared their insight by writing books. I have a case full of your work, and they have been my biggest source of inspiration for chasing the elusive perfect loaf. Thanks go to the web development team at Food 52, who have been bread subscribers from the beginning. To the worldwide sourdough community on Instagram, whose openness and generous nature have kept the conversation going about #realbread.

Thanks to Frances Boswell, whose light and confident hand helped shape many of the images in this book. And finally to my photographer, Ngoc Minh Ngo, and her family, who patiently tolerated my learning curve with this project and endured its many stages of development. We met among the perfume of roses and have argued the placement of

crumbs but will always have a mutual appreciation for the beauty and movement of the seasons.

Introduction

It is a thick mid-July evening as hot air swirls around a small Brooklyn kitchen. I run an ice cube across my brow before dropping it into my drink. Twenty-one loaves of bread will be coming out of my tiny oven before sunup. As I remove lids from the cast-iron Dutch ovens housing dough, I make a concerted effort not to drop hot metal on my toes. I catch a glance of myself in the mirror: leaves still stuck in my hair from the day's fieldwork, wearing only a sports bra and boxer shorts. This is my Friday night in New York City. This has become my life as a gardener-baker.

I ponder how and why I got myself into this task: there is no glamour in the modest manipulation of dough, the sweaty companionship of an oven, or the cultivation of earth. As a baker, I superficially provide a nutritious and satisfying loaf to a supportive community who appreciates clean food. But it is my intention to encourage the profound in the ordinary. If my customers respond with the slightest curiosity for the sourdough process or begin to question the origin of the grain in their bread, I am even more content. The ability to educate as well as satisfy a visceral hunger is the driving force that makes the long hours, exhausting heat, and marginal profit worth it. Labor of love would be an understatement.

As a public gardener, a large portion of my job is to provide a similar experience. In the context of the garden, it is one of beauty and reprieve from New York's sometimes-abrasive environment. If the visitor walks away wanting to know more about heritage roses or the balance between beneficial and predatory insects, it becomes more than just a job. This gardening and baking discourse keeps me grounded to my community in an otherwise fragmented urban setting. It is not a static relationship but one encouraged to develop as conversation. When this dialogue revolves around what can so easily be taken for granted, we begin to live life fully and inspire each other to do great things.

My biophilic tendencies to cultivate the earth and nourish sourdough were encouraged by a childhood ripe with outdoor activity. On any typical Sunday, the dinner bell would inevitably ring, followed by a series of increasingly impatient honks from the 1977 Dodge Ram pickup parked outside the kitchen door. My hands were immersed in the cold mud of the nearby spring lot where we drew water, the pungency of watercress underfoot. I quickly released the most recent catch of crawdads fighting for space in their bucket, and ran through Queen Anne's laced fields back to the farmhouse. The aroma of Sunday brunch lingered in the humid air before I stepped foot into my grandmother's coal-stained domain. This was our weekly ritual orchestrated by the matriarch of the Owens family, a home-cooked, homegrown feast where everyone left their worries at the door.

These gatherings were preceded by a week's worth of hard work in the garden or fields and were supplied with the humble seasonal fruits of that labor: fried squash, our neighbor's own pork chops, gravy, and biscuits, washed down with sweet tea. Occasionally this menu was rotated with more thematic meals such as spaghetti with an aromatic sauce of fresh garden tomatoes and a warm loaf of Granny's sourdough. Weekends were often spent sitting under the chestnut trees smelling rain traveling up the valley until it reached our tin roof, signaling time for a carb-fueled nap. The howl of never less than a few dogs announced company arriving down the quarter-mile potholed driveway. If we were lucky, my father and his rowdy brother would entertain our guests with intoxicated jam sessions on the back porch while I whittled pieces of wood on my lap. I was never a bored child, and television did not interest me. No one was ever concerned or embarrassed that my feet were perpetually stained from the red clay of those east Tennessee hills.

There were endless tasks on those 140 acres. Goats required grazing rotation, the garden needed tilling, fencerows needed to be Bush Hogged, the hay baled. Grandchildren were encouraged to explore the woods when they weren't helping with chores, turning over stumps to see what critters were revealed. We knew and relied on our neighbors' watchful eyes and traded for goods and services. I had the freedom to explore the natural world and to learn the ethics of hard work and community through rural life.

I've been trying to re-create the natural phenomena of this childhood wonderland since. Perfection, so effortlessly expressed by the irregularities of the universe, has been the pursuit of countless personal and artistic explorations. By offering my working hands, my life has evolved as an agent of nature, culminating in gastronomic, artistic, and horticultural investigations. I strive to act as a vehicle through which the forces of air, water, earth, and fire are passed to create the magnificent as well as the ordinary.

In my work as a ceramicist, this manifests in grand gestures of organic texture and form. I spent hours studying the humble seedpod in a lakeside studio at Bernheim Forest, one of the most beautiful arboretums in the country. Lines of dehiscence and divine patterns of nature were translated into fantastical ceramic creatures that defied function. These sculptures most often ended up in someone's foyer or on their coffee table, the subject of their next cocktail hour with friends. But the indulgent ability to spend such precious time emulating nature was a turn-on.

Eventually the burden of student loans and the reality of adult life forced a few hard decisions. After six years as a professional artist, what seemed like an old-fashioned lifestyle of health insurance, retirement plans, and workdays with clearly defined hours was never more alluring. Was it possible to pursue these luxuries without sacrificing passion? I pondered how I could shift focus without losing authenticity. Lamenting the loss of craft in so many disciplines, a glass artist on the circuit asked if I had ever thought of pursuing a deeper education of what inspired my work—nature. This question opened my mind to a whole new range of possibilities, namely the art and science of gardening. Surely I could combine my love of nature with the tactile processes of gardening and find a real job, preferably at a botanic garden, preferably in a large(r) city. The vision came into focus, and in six months I was packing my studio, tearfully leaving the solace of the woods for the concrete streets of New York City for a certificate program in horticulture.

After a twenty-seven-month intensive in all things plants at the New York Botanical Garden's School of Professional Horticulture, I accepted the politically substantial and labor-intensive position of Rosarian at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG). My first January days were spent reining in the rambling old garden roses, tying up climbers, and tidying up the wildly gregarious Rose Hill. But the more immediate and pressing need was to deal with a little-known and fatal plague called rose rosette virus. It had been diagnosed several years prior and was taking the life of many of the most prized specimens of the Cranford Rose Garden. In addition to my curatorial responsibilities, I was expected to assess and deal with this issue as well as provide a beautiful display that suggested the perfect picture of health. It was an overwhelming task.

It was during this time that I had to embrace the dynamics of both plant and human disease. For many years I had experienced digestive distress, coming in various waves of annoyance. But in 2010 these symptoms worsened, and in one rather extreme episode I lost twenty-five pounds in two weeks. After an additional year of on-and-off episodes like this, I became frustrated with doctors suggesting that I take unnecessary pharmaceuticals or that working with the soil was making me sick! I took control of my own health, which required an honest assessment of lifestyle choices as well as an untraditional approach to nutrition as a healing power. What I had erroneously thought of as healthy eating combined with an irritable bowel and the stresses of urban living was taking its toll. Basically, at the age of thirty-three I had to learn how to eat. No more gluten-free "health foods" with industrialized additives, sugar pills acting as supplements, or Americanized portions of easily accessible processed food on the run. But the biggest positive impact on my digestive health has been the rotation of sourdough into my diet.

Converting a disease-ridden, chemically dependent rose garden into an organic oasis of insects and flower power has been a symbolic practice for doing the same with my own body. Embracing the dynamics of fermentation and microbial communities, cutting processed foods and chemical fertilizers, instituting patience where needed, learning to let go and breathe—this enlightenment proved beneficial in both the kitchen and the garden. I began enjoying foods I had not been able to process for years. Bread was now a pleasurable experience rather than one riddled with anxiety. With the support of a team of horticulturists, the garden was overflowing with colorful bloom. Baking with sourdough became a cathartic expression of these progressions and allowed my hands to be a meditative guide to the dough. The meeting of these disciplines has been a full-circle path with endless inspiration.

Soon my obsession resulted in copious amounts of bread and other goodies—too much for a single girl living on her own. I was addicted to something healthy and I wanted to share it! Contagious with enthusiasm for my new mania, friends and other gardeners began gifting piles of fresh produce to concoct recipes.

Ingredients from my garden, including weeds, began creeping into my repertoire as well. Not long thereafter, requests from friends and co-workers were being made for special events and to share with their families.

I have not been able to choose between these two professions, their seasonal rhythms are almost inseparable in the support of one another. This book is one more expression of the instinctive bonds to nature developed while I was growing up rurally but cultured when I became a ceramicist and eventually a gardener. I have learned to further express these tendencies through a love for whole foods, great grains, and the people who wish to share them. It has just been a question of how to make this a more consistent service.

As an effort to provide good bread with local ingredients on a regular basis, my small, subscription-business BK17 Bakery was born. I chose this model because it allowed me to plan. Because I knew my production ahead of time, I could buy the freshest flour from the best sources, making the bread taste unbelievably alive. It also cultivated a relationship with my community that I had never had before. In a city where you can live for years in the same building as hundreds of other people without ever meeting them, suddenly I was bumping into subscribers on the street or in the corner bodega. I witnessed children cutting teeth on my crusty loaves. My gut and body were finally healing, and increasingly optimistic, my heart grew full. It was a positive-feedback loop that kept spinning further and further

from my immediate reaches. Soon restaurants, provisions stores, and individuals began seeking more supply than I had the time to provide.

The following pages are a result of this journey, a need to satisfy all those hungry bellies and inquisitive souls who just want to provide fresh food and healthy grains to their friends and family. I may not be able to bake every single person a loaf, but I can empower them with the recipes and basic techniques for doing it themselves.

Part One

THE SOURDOUGH

1 | Kitchen Notes

This book is an outpouring of baking obsession from a 70-square-foot kitchen on the top floor of a drafty house in winter doubling as a stuffy summer apartment. It is largish by some New York standards but still quite limited in space and appliances. My oven is circa 1960s, and I have never owned a stand mixer. I have learned to bake with confidence by getting to know the quirks and inadequacies of my oven, using a thermometer to note its particular behavior. I encourage you to do the same, as this will free you from the gospel of a recipe and allow you to adjust according to your kitchen's idiosyncrasies. Keeping a journal for kitchen notes is invaluable for improving upon each successive bake.

For BK17 bread production, I use steam-injected deck or wood-fired ovens, simply out of convenience and an effort to maximize my time. But every recipe was developed in my personal kitchen, and it is my intention to present this book in a straightforward manner for the home baker. You may use this book with more luxurious appliances, but be aware that mechanized mixing or fan-assisted ovens will alter consistencies and baking times.

Learning to mix bread and pastry by hand is infinitely helpful even if you decide later to use a machine instead. Although the modern convenience of a food processor or stand mixer may make some of these recipes seem more approachable, it removes you from the tactile sensations that invite mindfulness into each step in the process. Particularly if you are new to bread baking with sourdough, I encourage you to set the mixer aside and use your hands to guide the dough. This will help you to better gauge hydration and fermentation initially.

An Artisan's Toolbox

These recipes are all quite approachable and should allow you to produce beautifully rustic and nutritious baked goods with the most important tool: your hands. However, there are a few additional must-haves necessary to equip your kitchen. If you are acquainted with baking, these perhaps already reside in your cupboard. Most of the tools can be found at quality baking supply stores or sourced easily online.

Digital Scale

Baking is a fairly precise avocation whose success relies on consistent ingredients and mindful practices. For this reason, weighing your ingredients is one of the most important strategies for avoiding failure. Do yourself a favor and spend $25 on a small scale.

There are many good-quality, reasonably priced scales on the market. Choose one that measures in both grams and ounces and can tare the weight of your mixing bowl. Because most scales do not accurately measure ingredients such as spices or salt lighter than 10 grams, these are dictated in volume amounts.

Dough and Bowl Scrapers

Dough scrapers (sometimes referred to as bench knives) are ideal for lifting dough and pastries from your work surface. Mine is a natural extension of my hand and always close to my side. Choose one with a stainless-steel blade and a handle designed for easy grip. I also keep two bowl scrapers on hand: one made of stiff plastic for removing dough from a bowl and one that is a more flexible silicone material ideal for transferring soft butter, melted chocolate, and batters.

Mixing Bowls and Measurement Tools

You will need, at most, three bowls of stackable sizes to make a batch of bread, pastries, and cakes. The largest should hold about 5 quarts, giving you room to work the dough in the bowl as well as allow it to expand during rising.

Measuring cups are helpful for scooping flour, and you will need a set of tablespoons and teaspoons to measure small amounts of spices and salt. Source bowls and measuring tools made of nonreactive materials such as ceramic, glass, stainless steel, wood, plastic, or enamel.

Bannetons and Couches

Bread dough requires support during its final proofing or rising to encourage the trapping of gases needed to give rise and shape to a baked loaf. *Bannetons* (also referred to as *brotforms* or proofing baskets) are specialty baskets made from breathable materials such as wicker and can either be lined with heavy linen or not. When unlined, they impart beautiful patterns to the dough, creating an artisan quality to the bread. With either version, flour generously upon initial acquisition as well as on subsequent uses to prevent the dough from sticking to the basket. For moist doughs such as the Friendship Loaf (this page) or the Ploughman's Loaf (this page), I prefer to use linen-lined bannetons to encourage the dough to maintain shape and avoid unnecessary sticking to the form. Medium-hydration breads such as Brooklyn Sourdough (this page) will be equally at home in lined and

unlined bannetons as well as free-form *couches* (pronounced *koosh*). Most breads in this book weigh about 1½ to 2 pounds (680 to 900 g). Source medium-size baskets that will accommodate this, usually about 8½ inches across if round and about 5½ by 12 inches if oblong.

A couche is a piece of heavy, natural linen that, when dusted generously with flour and laid on a board or sheet pan, can support your dough in various shapes. I use my couche when I want to create long *batards*, baguettes, or *fougasse* (French-inspired sculptural loaves). Use the weight of several loaves to support each other with a fold of linen in between.

Lame, Razor, or Scissor

As bread dough is transferred from a banneton to the oven, it will experience several transformations before it is finished and ready to cool. The initial transformation is expansion and emancipation of water from the dough. By creating a score or slash on the top of the loaf, a release point liberates steam, encouraging maximum volume, or oven spring. These slashes are done with a razor blade or a tool called a *lame* (pronounced *lahm*) that has a handle holding a blade. Scissors are also effective and can create rustic or highly decorative patterns.

Scoring with a razor or lame can be made at various angles to achieve different results and prevent unseemly, awkward blowouts in your loaf. Doughs of higher moisture (80%–100% hydration) will generally accommodate a more shallow, 90-degree slash whereas the more aggressive spring of a medium-hydration loaf will need a deeper 30- or 45-degree angle to control expansion. You may choose to create highly decorative or simpler traditional patterns, however you prefer.

Dutch Oven or Clay Baker

When baking at home, the closest you can come to achieving the effects of an artisanal steam-injected oven is by using a Dutch oven or lidded clay casserole. These hefty workhorses will trap the steam in the initial stage of baking, allowing the loaf to completely expand before the crust sets. Steam also assists the conversion of starches to sugars in the crust, contributing to increased flavor and a pleasing deep brown color. Cast-iron and enamel Dutch ovens work beautifully, with lidded clay casseroles being my second choice. You may choose to purchase a “double” Dutch oven, whose lid converts into a cast-iron skillet. The only limitation of using any of these options is that you must shape your loaves to accommodate their form.

Hearthstone

Alternatively referred to as a baking or pizza stone, this versatile item transfers the oven’s heat directly to your breads, pizzas, and other flatbreads to produce the crispiest crusts and best oven spring. Purchase the thickest one you can find that fits inside your oven. You can also use clean firebricks or quarry stone as well, but just make sure neither has been treated with glues or unstable refractories that might transfer to your food.

Peel

Traditionally crafted from wood, this tapered shovel-like board with a handle allows you to easily transfer loaves, flatbreads, and pizzas to your hot oven. If you don’t fancy keeping one around, the back of a sheet pan or clean plywood can do the trick. It is an essential tool in my kitchen, always within easy reach.

Roasting Pan

This is the water receptacle used to generate steam and humidity in the hearth baking method. Choose one that you don't mind getting a bit rusty and designate it just for bread baking.

Spray Bottle/Mister

Used with the hearth baking method, this will allow you to spray the walls of your oven before and after loading your loaves onto the hot stone. Just be mindful not to spray your glass oven light (POW!).

Heat-proof Gloves

Improved dexterity during the baking process allows you to handle dangerously hot equipment like a Dutch oven with ease. Purchase a pair of Kevlar kitchen mitts or leather welder's gloves from a local supplier or online.

Cast-iron Skillet

This inexpensive kitchen tool is irreplaceable in my kitchen. It has even heat distribution and retention and can go straight from a burner to the oven. It is perfect for upside-down cakes (or tarte tatins), Dutch pancakes, cornbread, *fritelle*, and so much more! Look for them in kitchenware shops,

or restore a vintage find. They clean up easily and will last beyond a lifetime. If you choose to purchase a double Dutch oven, you may simply use the lid for the same applications.

Rolling Pin

I use a wooden and tapered French pin for all my recipes, as I find it easy to manipulate. You may, however, prefer to use a heavy marbled one for laminated doughs or pastry. Their weight will assist in rolling as well as keep them cool as you work.

Food Processor

Although it is important to learn to mix without one of these, they can be incredibly useful for making vegetable purees for breads, or for Scarlet Runner Bean Hummus (this page). Pastry crust can also be made in a food processor, once you have mastered making it by hand.

Mortar and Pestle and Spice Grinder

One of the oldest tools in the kitchen, the mortar and pestle is unrivaled for its ability to unlock fragrance and achieve textures not attainable through mechanical means. Use it to pound chilies, whole spices, or lemon zest with sugar, or to make pastes. The best ones are made of a heavy material such as marble that will stay stable when used. You can purchase them inexpensively from Hispanic or Asian groceries.

Another useful tool is a coffee or spice grinder that can be used to pulverize hard whole berries and seeds such as allspice or *mahlab*. If you haven't used freshly ground spices before, you will be amazed at the depth of flavor this simple step achieves.

Parchment Paper

This versatile, ovenproof kitchen paper will assist you in a variety of tasks. It prevents cookies and pastries from sticking to your sheet pan and allows you to load a Dutch oven with ease; cleanup is simple and easy. Parchment comes in various grades; heftier paper is recommended for the high temperatures in this book. When using it to bake bread or pizza, remove it after 15 to 20 minutes, or the paper may turn black. You may choose not to use it, and sprinkling some cornmeal or coarse semolina under your loaf or pizza may suffice for getting it to slide off your peel. You may use a Silpat baking mat for pastries, although I prefer the performance of parchment, especially in recipes with high butterfat.

Sheet Pans

When I first began experimenting in the kitchen, my budget allowed purchases of only the most inexpensive items. I skimped on things such as sheet pans and regretted it later as they warped in the oven, letting juices run wildly and making cleanup a cursed activity. When you invest in one of these workhorses, it is worth it to spend a little more for the heftiest gauge you can source.

Tins, Bundts, Pie Pans, Cookie Cutters, and More

There are a number of recipes in this book that call for specific products, but some of these can be adapted to what you may already have on hand. Be resourceful and keep an eye out at thrift stores. If you are new to baking, start with acquiring a basic 9-inch pie plate, round cake pans, a few deep dishes to accommodate cobblers, bars, and casseroles, and a muffin tin. From there, you can work your way up to the specialty items such as madeleine and doughnut forms or a popover pan.

Cooling Racks

Baked goods benefit from being cooled with air circulating across all surfaces. Do not allow items to cool flush with a plate or counter, as this will encourage steaming and soften their texture.

Fine Mesh Strainer

A strainer will assist you in everything from sifting powdered sugar to making syrups and curd. You may also wish to purchase a screen for sifting flour to encourage a more open bread crumb. These come in various gauges depending on how much bran you wish to remove from the flour. Sifted bran can then be useful for dusting bannetons or the counter when shaping loaves.

Microplane, Box Grater, and Mandolin

A microplane zests citrus to such a fine texture that it will disappear in your batter or dough, leaving behind its incredible flavor. Use a box grater for preparing cheese and vegetables. A mandolin will slice vegetables and fruit thinner than you could with a knife and, most important, with consistency. Purchase one with a guard, as they are dangerously sharp and can easily take off the tip of a finger.

Thermometers

Over time, you will be able to gauge when a loaf is ready without gadgetry by observing its hollow sound when thumped as well as its caramelized appearance. However, it may be helpful initially to have a long-stemmed, digital, instant-read thermometer. Generally, after the internal temperature of an enriched loaf with butter, eggs, or milk reaches 190°F to 196°F, it is done. Drier crusty breads need to reach between 200°F and 210°F on the inside. Additionally, keep an oven thermometer on hand. Every oven has its quirks, and keeping one inside the oven will only make you a more informed baker.

Towels

When retarding dough in the refrigerator, first cover it with a towel before wrapping in plastic. This will absorb any condensation while it is retarding. Use lint-free fabrics and weaves of linen or cotton.

Plastic or Linen Bowl Covers

You will need to keep dough and leaven moist during proofing. I like to use large garbage bags to wrap the whole bowl, being careful not to let the plastic come in contact with the sticky dough. If used this way, you may reuse the bags many times over. You may also wish to purchase linen bowl covers that can be washed. If retarding or bulk proofing for an extended period of time, first wet the fabric, ringing out any excess moisture before placing it over the bowl.

Terminology

This section is a quick-reference of terms applied most often in this book. Some terms, such as *starter*, are further explained in detail in the following pages. If you are new to baking, specifically with sourdough, these will be helpful not just for honoring recipe instructions but also for understanding the methodology behind the techniques.

Baker's Math

Most of the bread recipes in this book were created using a formula of specific proportions of ingredients. The behavior and inherent characteristics of each ingredient dictate its amount in relation to other ingredients. Once you are able to understand how to formulate these proportions, you will be able to tweak or create your own versions of these recipes to suit your access to different flours and also your preferences. It is not necessary to learn baker's math to use this book, but it is one more tool that will liberate you from the bounds of a recipe. You can use it to scale an ingredient up or down. If you prefer a higher percentage of whole grain in some breads, with a little experience in tow, baker's math will allow you to do so successfully.

In baker's math, every ingredient is expressed as a percentage of the total flour weight, which is always considered to be 100%. To determine the amounts of other ingredients in a dough, already knowing the weight of flour, we can easily calculate accordingly. For example, if you are working with 1000 grams of flour, you can then multiply percentages:

70% hydration is 1000 g × 0.70 = 700 g water (see note at right)

2% salt is 1000 × 0.02 = 20 g

20% leaven is 1000 × 0.20 = 200 g

40% whole grain flour is 1000 × 0.40 = 400 g

Note: You should weigh ingredients in grams for amounts greater than 10 grams.

Learning the qualities of each ingredient will be a journey on its own, and you will discover over time the most effective ratios. For example, when increasing the ratio of thirsty whole grains, you will need to increase hydration as well. Likewise, the starches in whole-grain flours will encourage faster fermentation, which in turn may require less leaven in the final dough or shorter proofing times. Once you get the hang of this book, experiment and play as you see fit. And if you have any exciting discoveries, I hope that you will share them with me!

Hydration

This refers to the amount of water present in bread dough in relation to the total flour weight. For the purposes of this book, hydrations of 80% to 100% are considered "high," with hydration in the 60%

range considered low, performing as very stiff doughs. Most of the breads in this book are between 70% and 80% hydration.

Fermentation

Fermentation is a technique used in many different food preparations to achieve a more nutritious as well as delicious result. This book uses the term *fermentation* in reference to grains, seeds, and flour. It is the action of a community of microbes who gobble up the available starches and sugars and then excrete alcohol, acidic compounds that flavor dough, and carbon dioxide, which in turn leavens the dough.

Starter

This is the essential fermented culture used in this book. It is created by capturing microflora naturally present on the flour, on your hands, in the air…everywhere around you! You will keep your

starter at a 100% hydration level, meaning equal parts flour and water by *weight.* Use this consistent ratio to build leaven for hearth loaves and to mix into batters for cakes, cookies, crusts, and quick breads. When building hearth breads, always use starter that has been refreshed (fed) at least once before mixing your leaven. You may use unfed starter (as long as it has been brought to room temperature) for recipes that incorporate quick leavening agents such as baking powder and soda. Instructions for how to create your own starter are on this page.

Leaven (*Levain*) Build

Leaven is the intermediate step between your starter and bread dough and is often referred to by the French *levain.* It is essentially a pre-ferment using a small amount of starter to inoculate a mixture of flour and water. After fermentation of this mixture is achieved, it will be used to leaven the dough. The leaven ingredients in this book often use strong bread flour hydrated at 100% (equal parts flour and water by weight) but may alternatively use other flours or moisture levels to evoke fullness of flavor from particular grains. The subtle differences between a stiff or liquid leaven, the length of time it ferments, and the temperature at which it ferments will culture various microbial communities. This will result in more or less acidity, chewiness, crust color, and/or rise, among other nuances. For this reason, I do not use one master method for building leaven, as I feel this is cheating myself out of flavor potential.

Dough Build

There are several key stages to building dough. These include the mixing and dispersal of ingredients, hydration of flour, and initiation of fermentation. The instructions in this book assume you will be mixing by hand, which is the best way to learn the behavior of dough and its cues of fermentation.

In general, always combine starter and liquids first before adding dry ingredients.

Autolyze (Rest)

Autolyzation is simply a resting period for bread dough, allowing the flour to absorb moisture, which in turn activates enzymes and the assimilation of gluten proteins. These proteins, gliadin and glutenin, are what composes gluten and allows your dough to build strength. You may or may not need to mix in the leaven before autolyzation, so read the recipe carefully before proceeding.

Bulk Rise

After bread dough is mixed, it goes through a period of fermentation during which its volume, or bulk, increases considerably. This usually takes anywhere from 3 to 4 hours, depending on the formula as well as the ambient temperature of your kitchen. During this time you will do a series of turn-and-folds that will help the gluten assemble, trapping carbon dioxide in a web-like matrix.

Retardation

Dough leavened with sourdough greatly benefits from a long and leisurely rise. Retardation is using cooler temperatures to slow fermentation, thus improving the flavor and digestibility of the bread as well as preventing it from overproofing. Retardation can be done during bulk rise, especially with

eager whole-grain dough, but it can also be performed after final shaping. It is a helpful technique, especially when you need to step away from the dough-making process.

If you want to retard your loaves for an extended period (more than 8 hours), keep your refrigerator temperature hovering around 37°F or 38°F, especially during summer. You may find that a fridge kept at the typical 41°F may be too warm. Remember that the microbes responsible for fermentation will slow down during retardation but will not completely cease feeding.

Techniques

A number of books have been written over the past thirty years that are vital to the home baker. It is not my intention to reiterate their invaluable depth of knowledge in this volume. However, there are a few basic techniques that you will need to master. More details are included in the recipe instructions themselves, but the following is a simplified overview of mixing, shaping, and baking the many varied recipes in this book.

You will need to practice many of these techniques before you get a feel for their timing. If you are new to experimenting in the kitchen with sourdough, start with what you find inspiring and appropriate to the season, but stay simple. Recipes using starter that doesn't need to be refreshed before mixing, such as Lemon Madeleines (this page), Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins (this page), Honey Rose Cake (this page), and Salsify Latkes (this page), are good starts for the novice baker. Once you have a feel for the behavior of your starter before and after feedings, you may wish to move on to breads and pastry that have more steps and sensitive timing.

Mixing by Hand

Using your hands to mix bread dough is your greatest tool in learning to gauge fermentation. Once the flour is added to the water and leaven slurry, plunge your hand into the bowl and rotate your wrist in a clockwise, circular motion. With your other free hand, turn the bowl counterclockwise as you work, creating inertia in the ingredients. As the dough comes together, squeeze your fingers on the finishing turns to further hydrate and develop the gluten.

Also use this technique to incorporate salt into the dough, making sure it is completely dissipated before returning to bulk rise.

Turn-and-Fold

Performed inside the bowl, this step strengthens and aerates bread dough. It is performed in lieu of kneading and is particularly helpful with very moist doughs. Simply wet your hand and grab the dough from the outside edge along the inside of the bowl. Pull and stretch it up and over onto itself. Rotate the bowl one-quarter turn and repeat the process until the dough has been completely turned, about 5 to 6 turns. Allow to rest, and repeat at 30- to 45-minute intervals until bulk rise is completed. You should notice a significant improvement of dough strength with each successive round of turning and folding.

Slap-and-Fold

Performed outside the bowl, this step also strengthens and aerates bread dough. It is a fun process that may result in a few splatters, raising eyebrows until you get the hang of it.

Pick the dough up to about eye-level and release it gently, dragging the edge of the dough as it hits the counter. Fold the dough still in your hand over onto the portion on the counter. This is done with quick and light motions as you master the technique. Repeat, using your bench knife to lift the dough if necessary and giving it a quarter turn each time until you feel the dough tighten, anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes. Return the dough to the bowl and cover before finishing the recipe instructions for bulk rise.

Preshape

This step is performed after bulk rise. Being careful to retain the gases in the dough, remove it from its bowl onto a floured surface. Divide using your bench knife. Fold the edges into the center to achieve a loosely circular shape, using your bench knife to assist with sticky doughs.

Bench Rest

After preshaping, bench rest allows the dough to relax into its suggested form. Flip the preshaped dough seam side down, cover with a towel or plastic, and allow to rest for 10 to 30 minutes, depending on the ambient temperature of your kitchen. You will see the dough visibly relax and spread a bit when it is ready for its final shaping.

Batard:

Using your bench knife, flip the preshaped loaf onto a lightly floured surface. Using both hands, bring the left and right sides of the bottom half of the dough into the middle, creating an upside-down teardrop. From the bottom point, lift and tuck into the dough, pulling as you go to create tension. When you reach the end, use your palm to tamp the seam, sealing it closed. You may then roll the dough, tapering the ends. Place it in a well-floured banneton or couche.

Final Shape

Final shaping very much depends on your preferred bread shapes, but some doughs do lend themselves better to particular forms. The following are the two most basic techniques. Other specialized processes are described in the recipes themselves.

Boule:

Using your bench knife, flip the preshaped loaf onto a lightly floured surface seam side up, gently patting into a round disk. Gently pull and stretch the bottom into its center and press. Repeat from the top and the two sides. Then stretch the surface of the top down and sides to the center. Flip it over, seam side down, and gently scoot it across the counter in short, circular gestures to tighten the circular form and create surface tension. Use your bench knife to pick it up and place, seam side up, into a well-floured banneton.

Mixing Batters and Pastry That Include Starter

Using starter in a cake batter or pastry crust requires a somewhat different strategy from traditional mixing methods.

Always bring your ingredients to room temperature, *unless otherwise noted.* This will assist in incorporating them into the batter without overmixing.

Attempting to mix cold ingredients, especially starter, will result in a frustrated baker, a streaky batter, and uneven baking. I also recommend using a fork to break and disperse the starter into the batter instead of stirring with a spoon. Avoid using a hand mixer, which encourages gluten development in the starter, undesirable for the tender crumb of cakes, cookies, and quick breads. Furthermore, the starter will stubbornly wrap itself around the beaters, especially if it is a thick batter. At the least, it should resemble egg-drop soup after you have mixed in the sourdough, with fine threads of the starter present, not large ribbons. With some recipes such as cake batters, go a bit further and mix the starter into the batter until it disappears. This will help to avoid unwanted leavened bubbles in the crumb. If you are mixing starter into a pastry crust, try to drop it in small tablespoons over the bowl of dough to encourage even mixing, but be careful not to overwork it.

Proofed (or Proved)

This term refers to a loaf that has completed its fermentation cycle and is ready to bake. It will take some time to observe and learn when the microbes in your dough have exhausted the available food sources in the flour and leavened the loaf fully. The banneton should look full, the dough puffy and with good form. If it has proofed for too long, the loaf will begin to collapse and the baked bread will

taste overly sour. One trick is to gently poke the surface of the loaf. If the finger impression bounces back immediately, allow to proof a bit longer. If the impression lingers, it is ready to bake.

Baking with a Dutch Oven

If you want a hearty, rustic loaf with a thick, crispy crust and a moist interior crumb, Dutch ovens will allow you to balance the heat and humidity needed to produce quality loaves in your own home kitchen.

If you have retarded your loaves overnight in the refrigerator, remove and allow them to come to room temperature for at least 1 hour. Cut a piece of parchment paper larger than the circumference of your loaf but small enough to fit into your Dutch oven without too much excess. Preheat your oven to 500°F. Place your Dutch oven on the lowest rack and heat for 20 minutes while you prepare your first loaf. Keep the other loaf in the refrigerator until ready to bake.

Sprinkle a touch of cornmeal on the parchment paper and transfer your loaf onto it, seam side down. A few minutes before the Dutch oven is ready, score the top of the loaf with a razor blade, lame, or scissors so the steam will release during baking. Carefully place it in the preheated pot, position the lid, and return to the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 470°F and bake with the lid on for 20 minutes. Remove the lid and bake for another 12 to 20 minutes (see note), until the crust is a deep, dark brown.

Note: I prefer my bottom crust as thick and dark as possible, but if you are using a cast-iron pot, you will need to remove the loaf after 20 to 25 minutes of baking time to avoid the bottom from burning before the loaf is done. This must be done carefully so as to avoid burning yourself on the hot iron. Finish baking on a stone for 12 to 20 minutes.

Baking with a Hearthstone

Hearthstones are excellent retainers of heat and can be stored permanently in your oven, increasing its overall performance. I prefer to keep mine positioned on the middle rack with my steam pan below. This allows easy access for baking other items such as pizzas and flatbreads in addition to hearth loaves. Using a hearthstone to bake the latter allows you the freedom to form them in more ways than just a boule. Batards, baguettes, fougasse, and couronne should all be baked in this manner.

Preheat your oven to 500°F–550°F at least 1 hour prior to baking with your stone in it, as it takes a bit of time to gain heat. If this step is skipped, you will not have adequate oven spring on your loaves. If you have retarded your loaves overnight in the refrigerator, remove them and allow them to come to room temperature during this time.

Position your roasting pan on the rack below your stone, and dust your peel generously with cornmeal and/or coarse semolina. When the oven is ready, turn your loaves out onto your peel, seam side down, shaking the peel to ensure they do not stick to its surface. (Alternatively, you may use parchment to prevent the loaves from sticking to the peel.) Score the loaves and carefully pour about 75 to 80 grams of water into the hot roasting pan. Spray the walls of your oven with water (avoiding the glass lightbulb) and load the loaves onto the hot stone. Immediately shut the door to trap the moisture, and bake for 2 to 3 minutes. Open the door once more and spray the walls again with water. Immediately shut the door and bake for 5 to 7 minutes before turning the heat down to 450°F. Bake for another 25 to 35 minutes, until the crust is a deep, dark brown and the loaf sounds hollow when thumped on the bottom.

Blind Bake

This simple step is prebaking a pastry or piecrust before adding the filling. It is done to keep the crust from absorbing too much moisture from the filling as well as to prevent it from puffing or slouching in the oven. You may purchase pie weights made from ceramic or metal beads, but dry beans or rice work just as well. Once you have rolled out the crust and dropped it into a form, prick it, and then line it with parchment paper or aluminum foil. Add the weights, beans, or rice and bake according to recipe instructions.

Garden Notes

Bringing the Garden into the Kitchen

Cultivating or harvesting food crops gives us a particular relationship to those ingredients that, sadly, has been lost in our modern convenience culture. Having grown up on a farm, I am always surprised to observe urban schoolchildren gawk over a tomato they've never seen *in situ* or a squash leaf as big as their heads. This disconnection indicates a greater need for us to understand our food systems and make better choices about what goes into our bodies and nourishes our next generations. Gardening connects us with the cycles of the seasons and empowers us to provide our own sustenance—food at its highest nutritional content, straight from your yard. You and your children's enthusiasm to eat fresh produce will be so much greater if you have taken the time to plant, water, and care for your own food.

There is also a certain intelligence that is brought into the kitchen when we understand the ingredients we are using, beyond simply knowing their common names. Learning the needs of our food as dynamic, living things with their own relationships to the earth, the rain, and even to each other helps us to support food systems mindfully. Concepts of personal health overlap with those of soil health. Recognizing that a scarlet runner bean is related to a peanut and also a lentil, and that all

of these belong to the beneficial nitrogen-fixing legume family, we begin to wonder how they all improve soil health. And when we have a greater appreciation for soil health, we begin to make better choices to support it as well as ourselves.

Gardening can be as simple as plopping a few plants in the ground and waiting for the miracles of nature. But it can be as mindful as learning the relationships between what you grow. It is learning to recognize your advantages and to work within your limitations. This theme will surface in the kitchen as well, and learning to deal with these issues in either practice will bring balance to both.

As often as I mix the same formula for dough, every single bake is different. Fermentation may occur faster because the day was warm, the crust might be a little soft because it was humid. Icicles hanging from my windowsill will mean slow fermentation, which in turn encourages flavor complexity. And as often as I have planted tomatoes, every single season brings wildly varying weather that influences their yield. Learning to play the wildcard we've drawn is what keeps us engaged and on our toes. Indeed, most of the gardeners and bakers I know are obsessive perfectionists regardless (or perhaps because of) these unpredictable challenges.

If weeds constantly overrun your garden rows, ask yourself what those are and why they are growing there. Put down the hoe long enough to consider what the weeds are telling you. You may discover these annoyances are in fact free food, as many weeds such as purslane, lamb's quarters, and garlic mustard are as delicious as anything you can grow conventionally. Learning what weeds thrive where will also give you clues to your soil's profile. For example, the tasty plantain will often appear when soil is compacted, possibly leading you to plant a crop that would aerate the soil. Soon you will swell with pride as you bring herbs, fruit, and vegetables into your kitchen that taste infinitely better than any you can find at the supermarket.

Botanical Latin

Peppered throughout this book are descriptions of ingredients using botanical Latin. This is done for several reasons, the least of which is to avoid confusion that arises from inconsistent common names. More important, it also elucidates particular characteristics of that ingredient in the garden or the kitchen. Hopefully this use of language will encourage you to learn the relationships of these ingredients to their cousins and, if practiced often enough, will be incredibly helpful to you in both the culinary and natural world. If you know that fennel is related to anise and that both of these are related to the carrot, it will help you to be a more versatile cook, substituting flavors or ingredients as needed.

This binomial system is pretty simple to understand for the purposes here: The genus is the first of the two names and denotes a particular set of characteristics. It falls in rank below the family but above the species, and in plant names it is always capitalized. In *Triticum aestivum* (common wheat), for example, the genus is *Triticum.* The second name, the specific epithet, is a particular genetic designation that sets an organism apart from the other species of a genus. In common wheat, this is *aestivum.* The two used together name a species that occurs naturally in the wild, although some of these, like *Triticum aestivum*, have been cultivated for millennia.

Family names are not often used here, unless they give an important piece of information. For example, *Hordeum vulgare* (barley) may not sound much like the Latin binomial for wheat, but they both belong to Poaceae, or the grass family. When learning the differences between a grain and a seed or a pseudo-cereal, knowing these relationships is useful.

Having these tongue-twisting Latin names in your arsenal will also be helpful if you decide to source plants to grow in your garden, which I hope you will! By purchasing a seed or plant by its Latin name, you will be certain of what you are growing and how to cook with it. Likewise, if you decide to engage in wild crafting (also called foraging), learning a plant's scientific classification and identifying characteristics will allow you to discern between it and any poisonous impostors. Of course, feel free to use the common name thereafter, to avoid any embarrassing stuttering in front of your dinner guests. Or maybe just practice a few days ahead of time…

2 | Stocking the Pantry

Making great-tasting and healthy food requires more than just mastering techniques. Learning how to source your ingredients wisely and as fresh as possible will make the difference between a good and an outstanding meal. The following are some tips on finding, growing, and storing what you'll be using to create magic in the kitchen.

Produce and Meat

It is difficult to make quality food with poor-quality ingredients. Many recipes in this book include fresh fruit, vegetables, or a little meat, and I encourage you to source these organically and with respect for their natural cycles. Seasonal eating is not only taking advantage of what's available in the *now*, it's also learning to preserve or freeze the abundance provided at certain intervals to balance the leaner months. Considering the window for some of these items is short, you may want to stock your freezer and pantry with some reserves. You may just have a hankering for lavender peach muffins or rhubarb pot pie in the dead of winter, and using frozen fruit harvested earlier in the season will taste immeasurably better than anything shipped to you from another continent. In addition, you will find a few recipes here that teach you to make jam. Slathering a piece of crusty bread with summer fruit in the dead of winter will harken to days of blindingly hot sun and fragrant evenings. Trust me, when your toes are numb from cold, you will be happy you bothered.

There's nothing worse than a bland and mealy tomato in January. Alternatively, there may be little better than wiping sticky mango juice off of your chin in that same month. Globalization sure has confused matters, and I am always tempted by what is most exotic to my palate. My weakness for experimentation aside, I have found the most flavorful food is made with seasonal ingredients grown from small and local organic producers. Food availability and affordability differs, of course, by region or even continent. You may not live in a grove of lychee trees, but you might reside in or around Florida, California, or lucky you, even Brazil.

Whatever your access to fresh produce, it is important to remember that flavor and nutrition do not come from hothouse-grown fruits picked green and shipped to ripen. Fruits and vegetables should smell ripe and sweet in the hand when you buy them.

Community supported agriculture (CSA) models have made it much easier to acquire farm-fresh food in urban settings, and some farmer's market vendors are now accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Every year there are fewer excuses for not eating well. There is no need to empty your wallet in order to eat fresh and healthy food. Many ingredients in this book can be grown with a little terrace space, and even small sunny gardens can be amazingly productive with smart planning. If that is not an option, vie for a plot in a community garden. Some ingredients can also be sourced conscientiously from the wild with a trusty field guide and some good bug repellent (see Notes on Wild Crafting, this page).

By becoming a member of a CSA or shopping at your local farmer's market, you have access to food at a relatively fair price in exchange for subsidizing your farmer. I enjoy visiting a weekly farmer's market where I have the choice to augment what I grow myself. Whatever your gardening options (or limitations), patronizing a farmer is an opportunity to cultivate community and support people who personally take pride in their vocation. In addition to enjoying a decreased carbon footprint, I also tend to have more trust in someone who ekes out a living 50 miles away than in big agribusiness, even if the label touts "organic." Industrial conglomerates, despite their use of organic fertilizers or

low-impact pesticides, do little to nourish terroir. A small farmer using compost, manure, and crop rotations replenishes the soil and protects the watershed. You will not only taste the difference but you will feel it as well.

If you can’t frequent a local market or buy a CSA share, try growing a few things yourself. You will find there is no greater satisfaction than munching a radish grown on your terrace. Your neighbor’s asparagus will put the corner bodega’s to shame. The form and finish of your CSA’s carrots will reflect the soil and hands that grew them. You may even have to scrub them a little to loosen soil. They may be forked or a little crooked. But this is real food.

Grains and Flour

Perhaps one of the most important discussions (which really deserves the attention of a whole book) is that of grain and flour. How you obtain these and their resulting integrity will greatly affect the life of your starter as well as the flavor, digestibility, and nutrition of your food. Use whole-grain flours that have not been industrially processed on roller mills. This weakens the nutritional profile of the flour by removing the bran and germ during processing, only replacing some bran later to create "whole wheat" flour. There's really nothing whole about it, as the most nutritious germ oils are lost to encourage longer shelf life. And for heaven's sake, leave the bleached, self-rising, and enriched stuff on the shelf! It is dead and devoid of bioactivity and therefore counterintuitive to use in creating and maintaining an active sourdough culture. Using mindfully milled flour will make a dramatic difference in the presence of beneficial microbes in your culture, resulting in a better leavening of breads.

Specific varieties of grain and their histories are provided in the recipe notes of this book, but a few general words on sourcing here: The development of these recipes was done with organic, freshly milled, stone-ground flour. A great deal of it was regionally grown, with the bulk of it hailing from upstate New York (see Resources, this page). This means my all-purpose flour has visible bran flakes and performs quite differently than store-bought fluffy white flour. My whole wheat pastry flour would be considered coarse by some standards. Both of these soak up as much as ¼ cup (60 g) more liquid than most industrially processed flours, so if you are using those, adjust these recipes accordingly.

Grown in the fertile food shed of the Hudson Valley, these grains are subject to the whims of erratic weather patterns and can be difficult to source at times. This is just part of the cycle of seasonal eating. There are incredible varieties of heirloom grains (especially wheat) suited for harsh climates being revived across the United States. These include drought-tolerant varieties such as Sonoran wheat that perform outstandingly well as all-purpose flour and in small amounts in breads. Kamut is an ancient durum wheat from the Fertile Crescent that produces a beautiful golden flour well suited for cakes and pastries, and it is used throughout this book for its high protein and naturally sweet flavor. Turkey red is a heritage hard winter wheat now being grown all over the United States. Its tillers—the rootlike lateral structures protruding from the crown—help stabilize soil, preventing erosion and degradation of the land on which it is grown. These are just a few examples of the revolution we are experiencing to revitalize heritage grains that have not only nutritional superiority and a gentler footprint but greater flavor and digestibility as well. By purchasing these grains and flours you are contributing to preserving genetic diversity, not just supporting a dietary fad.

This philosophy of preservation and diversification should extend beyond our fascination with wheat to other grains, seeds, legumes, and pseudo-cereals as well. Alternative grains such as millet, buckwheat, amaranth, and rye are excellent for growing in crop rotation with wheat, corn, and beans. Learning to use and enjoy such options provides a market for these important crops beyond animal

feed and helps our farmers to protect the land. When prepared properly, they can be immensely satisfying, and there are many recipes here that include these.

Flour can be milled from a variety of different grains, nuts, and seeds. When using different grain-based flours, it is important to understand their protein content in relation to their performance. Generally the higher the protein (especially of glutenous flours), the stronger the flour and more voluminous the bake.

A few clarifications on specific flour profiles:

Bread flour refers to a strong flour made of hard wheat with a high protein content, usually 11% to 13%. It is ground and sifted to create a white flour that has the ability to produce an elastic gluten network. This is important, especially when making bread. It is useful when used with lower or no-gluten, whole-grain flours to avoid overly dense textures and achieve a pleasing loft.

High-extraction wheat, also sometimes referred to as “half-white,” is a medium-strength to high-protein flour that has been sifted to remove all but a small portion of the bran. It continues to retain all the germ, making this a highly nutritious and flavorful flour that perishes easily. Use upon purchase or store in the freezer to retain freshness.

Whole wheat contains 100% of the original, high-protein wheat kernel. It can be purchased as fine, medium, or coarse. For pastries and cookies, I use a whole wheat flour ground from soft wheat that has some of the bran sifted and then reground. For breads, I prefer to use flour from a cultivar called Red Fife, for the deep caramelization that results in the crust. Like high-extraction flour, the germ oils in this flour go rancid quickly, so use upon purchase or store appropriately.

All-purpose, sometimes referred to as “plain flour,” is a mixture of hard and soft wheat with anywhere from 9% to 11% protein, depending on your supplier. It is a finer texture than most flours and can be used in biscuits, quick breads, cookies, and cakes. If accessible to you, finely ground Sonoran wheat is excellent used as all-purpose flour.

Pastry flour is made from low-gluten soft wheat. This is the finest textured flour of all, most useful in cakes and delicate pastries.

Nuts and Seeds

Nuts and seeds offer a concentration of calories, nutrition, and texture but must be handled appropriately to ensure freshness and proper digestion. It is always a good idea to purchase in bulk from a source that has good turnover to ensure a fresh selection. Bulk purchasing gives you license to nibble as well, the best way to judge before you buy!

The oil in nuts can go rancid quickly if not stored properly, and this will of course affect flavor and digestibility. Buy them whole and raw so you can toast and chop them yourself to get the best results. This requires a little more work in the kitchen but will make a remarkable difference in the flavor and quality of your food. Once you bring them home, store in an airtight container in a cool dark place. If you won't use them in a couple of weeks, you can even refrigerate or freeze them, sealed well, making sure not to expose them to humidity.

1. *Anethum graveolens*, dill 2. *Coriandrum sativum*, coriander 3. *Papaver somniferum*, breadseed poppy 4. *Foeniculum vulgare*, fennel 5. *Nigella sativa*, black cumin

Toasting Nuts or Seeds

A great way to enhance the flavor of baked goods containing nuts or seeds is to toast them first. For best results, preheat your oven to 350°F and spread in a single even layer on a rimmed sheet pan, stirring every 4 to 5 minutes. Nuts and seeds will signal their readiness by becoming fragrant. Follow your nose and watch closely, because once they are toasted they will burn quickly. Sunflower and pumpkin seeds will take 8 to 10 minutes, whereas hazelnuts, almonds, pecans, and walnuts will require a bit longer, anywhere from 12 to 17 minutes depending on their size, oil content, and freshness. Small seeds will become lightly brown on their outside skins, and larger nutmeats will reveal their toasty color on the inside of their flesh. If you need to peel hazelnuts after toasting, wait until they are completely cool and then rub between your hands to remove their skins.

Salt

Salt performs many functions in a recipe besides enhancing flavor. Most notably, it has the ability to pull water away from flour molecules, hindering hydration and enzyme activity. This enzymatic catalyzation converts starches into sugars that will act as food for your microbial community. For this reason, salt is added to the dough after initial mixing and a resting period, allowing the flour to fully absorb water and activate biochemical activity. Once added, it strengthens the assembly of gluten proteins, and you will notice the dough will begin to tighten and pull away from the bowl. If you find it difficult to incorporate the salt after autolyzation, add another dash or two of water to help it into the dough.

Salt also regulates fermentation, which can be helpful in warm weather or when using a high percentage of whole grains. It also acts as a preservative, lengthening the life of the bread. Finally, it also influences the coloring of bread crust as well as brightens the flavor of fruit.

All these functions are of course reliant on the proper amounts of salt used in a formula. Generally, 2% of the recipe's total flour weight is appropriate if no other salty ingredients are used. Because salt's influence is so important, it is integral that you use a quality pure source. Sodium chloride comes in many forms, but I suggest fine sea salt for its ability to absorb easily into the dough.

Water

Water is an essential ingredient, particularly in bread dough, as it initiates fermentation as soon as it is added to flour. Tap water quality varies by region, and overly chlorinated sources may have an adverse effect on the microbial communities you wish to cultivate. If in doubt, use filtered water. Water should be tepid, neither hot nor cold to the touch.

Baker's Secret Ingredient: Vodka

I prefer using vodka over water in my piecrusts. With most pastries, gluten formation is undesirable, producing a chewy instead of light and flaky texture. While gluten proteins readily assemble with the addition of water, ethanol discourages their formation. Once subjected to heat, the alcohol then evaporates, leaving space between the rest of the ingredients. In addition to proper butter layering, using this key ingredient leaves most people surprised to learn it is a sourdough crust. My local authority on Polish vodka recommended an inexpensive brand from his country, and I've kept it stocked ever since, but any brand will do. Keep it in the freezer.

Spices

Hopefully, many of the herbs and spices in this book are already in active rotation in your kitchen. If you find yourself without some on hand, take time to explore an ethnic market in your nearest city. These markets will not only stock exotic selections of spices, herbs, grains, and nuts but will often sell them in bulk, saving you the expense and waste of packaging that comes with buying at your local grocery store. If you live in a more rural area, there are several online retailers that sell superior spices at reduced prices (see Resources, this page).

Buy only a few ounces at a time, or share larger quantities with a friend so the spices don’t lose potency. Store in labeled, airtight containers and out of direct sunlight to ensure they retain their freshness, and sniff through your cupboard every six months or so. If your spices seem stale or don’t smell fragrant at all, it’s time to compost them.

Sugar and Other Sweeteners

With respect to food, the term *sugar* is normally applied to sucrose. The two main sources include the tropical sugarcane *Saccharum officinarum* and the temperate-grown sugar beet *Beta vulgaris* var. *esculenta.* These two important crops are not related botanically but belong to widely varying families Poaceae and Amaranthaceae. Thankfully, we have more choices than the mostly refined versions from these two plants that have dominated conventional cooking of this era.

Many recipes in this book use sugar to enhance the natural sweetness of fruit, chocolate, or whole grains. Every effort has been made to use the least amount necessary to achieve a pleasing result as well as sources that are nutritionally superior to refined white sugar. The hidden benefit of this strategy is an increase in flavor as well, which holds as much credence as dietary allowances in my household! Some applications, however, require a larger-than-ideal quantity, as a preservative in jams or compote. If you intend to eat these straightaway or freeze them instead of canning, you can cut the sugar by at least half. Whenever possible, use organic sources not only for their gentler effects on the land where it is grown but also for the health of the laborers who grow it.

Sugar has many other functions in recipes besides adding sweetness.

If you decide to swap the granulated sugar in a recipe for an alternative, I recommend choosing another granulated or dry source. Grated panela, sucanat, or jaggery is one of my favorite substitutes although it requires extra effort. The trade-off is a mellow caramel flavor that easily supplants white sugar. Granulated muscovado, which comes in both light and dark forms, is a less refined sugar that is an appropriate substitute as well. If you choose a liquid instead (such as honey or maple syrup), try

reducing the other liquids in the recipe. This may be difficult if the only other moisture in the recipe is the water in the starter.

Maple syrup and raw honey have the added benefits of antioxidants or minerals as well as a pleasing flavor of their own. Choose their grades or sources in respect to the other flavors in the recipe. Some honeys, such as chestnut, buckwheat, and lavender, have a surprising pungency that can either overpower or meld agreeably with the other ingredients. Many recipes work quite well with a milder honey from linden or acacia trees, orange blossoms, or wildflowers.

Other sugar sources such as coconuts, maple, and dates have become more readily available and promise added nutritional value and rich, deep flavors. Their inflated cost often keeps me from stocking them on my shelf, but they can be a wonderful treat, especially if you do not bake often or in large quantity.

Fats and Oils

Some recipes call for leaf lard or duck fat, two animal fats that I use readily for their particular flavor, performance, and texture. Source them from a good organic butcher, or render them yourself. Every Thanksgiving, I roast a duck for the sole purpose of collecting its fat drippings and storing them in the freezer for the rest of the year. This ingredient guarantees a silky mouthfeel in tortillas (this page) or a savory flavor to Vegetable Breadsticks (this page). It can also be used in place of lard in pastry crust such as for the Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust (this page). If you are a vegetarian, try using coconut oil in a cold, solid state instead, although its distinct flavor may not be desirable. Both lard and duck fat should be stored in the freezer until ready to use, especially if you need it only on occasion. Keep your organically sourced oils—extra-virgin olive, coconut, and peanut for frying—in a cool, dark place until ready to use.

Dairy and Eggs

Always use organic whole milk, whole yogurt, and full-fat buttermilk. Source these from a local farmer, and if you can get your hands on a raw source, even better. These products have not had their enzymes, a key aid in our digestion of lactose, destroyed by processing. Consuming mindfully handled raw dairy is easier on the tummy and more nutritive as well.

Source eggs with the same principles as dairy: local, free-range, and organic are key. You will notice the yolk will be a brilliant yellow-orange, indicating they come from happy chickens with a well-balanced foraging diet full of colorful carotenoids.

1. *Salvia officinalis*, garden sage 2. *Ferula asafoetida*, asafoetida 3. *Ocimum basilicum*, Thai basil 4. *Ocimum basilicum minimum*, dwarf globe basil 5. *Petroselinum crispum*, curly parsley 6. *Ocimum basilicum 'Genova'*, Genovese basil 7. *Papaver somniferum*, breadseed poppy 8. *Thymus vulgaris*, common thyme 9. *Anethum graveolens*, dill 10. *Nigella sativa*, black cumin 11. *Mentha piperita*, peppermint 12. *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*, slender mountain mint

Herbs

Fresh herbs are easy to purchase, but the most flavorful and interesting will be those that you grow yourself. Many common herbs such as thyme, mint, and basil have hundreds of different varieties. These most likely will not be available at your local grocer and will be freshest when picked right before going into your dish. If you find yourself with an abundance of aromatics such as lavender, mint, or chamomile at the end of the growing season, they can be hung to dry as well, making a delicious custom tea blend for the winter.

All herbs have their own optimal growing conditions that vary by species, but thankfully, most are fairly easy to grow. If you have full sun (at least 6 hours of direct light) and well-drained soil, you have a wide variety of choices. Many annual herbs such as fennel, basil, coriander, and anise can be directly sown from seed and may reappear each subsequent year as self-sowers. Others such as rosemary, lavender, scented geraniums, and oregano may be easier to grow from a stem cutting or division. Be aware of their annual, biennial, or perennial growing cycle, and enjoy not only their fragrance but also their ability to attract pollinators and predator insects into the garden. Situated close to other ornamentals or vegetables, herbs will often help bring balance into an organic garden.

1. *Nepeta x faassenii* ‘Walker’s Low’, catmint 2. *Allium schoenoprasum*, common chives 3. *Aquilegia vulgaris* ‘Miss MI Huish’, European columbine 4. *Rosa* ‘Harison’s Yellow’, yellow rose of Texas 5. *Tropaeolum majus*, nasturtium 6. *Syringa vulgaris*, common lilac 7. *Viola tricolor*, Johnny-jump-up 8. *Coriandrum sativum*, coriander/cilantro 9. *Abelia mosanensis*, Korean abelia

Edible Flowers

I cannot think of a more pleasurable activity than harvesting fresh, aromatic flower petals. They are a delight to handle in the field as well as process in the home and can be an enjoyable activity shared with friends or the smallest of helpers. Edible flowers have the incentive of adding color, texture, and flavor to your recipes. If you have space to grow your own, you will be rewarded with a wide variety of flavors ranging from spicy to perfume-like to herbaceous. Some of my favorites are roses, lilacs, violets, fava bean flowers, nasturtiums, calendula, marigold, mallow, chamomile, chive, clover,

borage flowers, and elderflowers. Many edible flowers can also be foraged from the wild, but be sure to familiarize yourself with the species before consuming (see Notes on Wild Crafting, this page). If you choose to purchase them, use only those that you know have been sourced conscientiously and have not been sprayed with pesticides. Flowers coming from a florist or nursery are often treated with harmful chemicals. To store your petals, place them on a wet paper towel in an airtight container. You will be surprised how long they will keep this way in the refrigerator! When using, serve only the petals, discarding the sepals, pistils, and stamens, which may taste bitter.

Notes on Wild Crafting

I am not bound for any public place, but for ground of my own where I have planted vines and orchard trees, and in the heat of the day climbed up into the healing shadow of the woods.

—Wendell Berry

Perhaps it is our deprivation of exposure to natural rhythms or the fact that many of us spend more time behind a screen than in contact with the rain, sun, soil, or wind. Suffice it to say, we need connection with our wild sides and the unpredictability of nature. Wild crafting not only provides this encounter but is also a source of free and highly nutritious food with which we have a direct relationship. Whether in our own gardens or in the wild, wild crafting is an *experience* that consequently supplies essential oils, proteins, and antioxidants not found in cultivated produce.

I've carefully selected ingredients with consideration of possible pressure on wild populations of plants. Notable candidates for foraging are invasive plants such as wild garlic mustard, whose presence in North American woodlands has meant the decline of many native trees. Other species need more careful management, with an awareness of the regeneration time of each community. No need to deplete our forests of a slow-growing perennial such as ramps when they can be found quite readily from conscientious vendors. It is good practice, however, to ask respectfully where the foraged items originate. If the answer is not satisfactory, support a vendor who knows exactly what their practices entail.

If you decide to set foot into the great wilds of field or forest, the following are a few words of caution for ethical and safe foraging. If you are new to this activity, take a class or organized

walk with a plant expert who can familiarize you with the area and any concerns specific to your region.

- *As a rule, never pick more than a third either of any one plant or of a population. Always leave some behind to ensure a reserve without disturbing nature's balance. Invasive species are one exception. You will actually help to restore balance by eradicating thuggish plants that would otherwise elbow out their native counterparts.*

- *Be aware of doppelgangers, as some are poisonous! Always bring a field guide and familiarize yourself with the identifying characteristics of any plant before harvesting.*

- *Consider your surroundings. Avoid busy highways and be cautious of urban vacant lots, as you may be unwittingly foraging where chemicals have leaked or been dumped.*

- *If your leaves or stems have wilted upon your return to the kitchen, place them in a bowl of cold water in the refrigerator. They will often perk up in an hour or so.*

3 | Sourdough Primer

How can a nation be called great if its bread tastes like Kleenex?
—Julia Child

Most seasoned bakers are aware of the use of sourdough to leaven breads, but its versatility in the kitchen goes well beyond the baguette. The following is an introduction to its humble components as well as the many nutritional and digestive benefits of using a sourdough culture.

What Is Sourdough and Why Use It?

Sourdough is a mixture of water and flour that houses a symbiotic relationship between wild yeasts (*Saccharomyces*) and various bacteria species (*Lactobacilli*). The action of the yeast gobbling up starches in the flour results in a carbon dioxide by-product that leavens bread. Beneficial lactic fermentation is responsible for creating an acidic environment where harmful bacteria and yeast cannot live but the beneficial microbes can. *Lactobacilli* are also responsible for breaking down phytates present in most grains, seeds, and nuts, making them more digestible for those with sensitive systems. For this reason, they are used in other recipes besides bread to assist in assimilation of nutrients as well as to augment flavor.

Sourdough also helps mitigate the effects of phytates. Seeds of various bean plants, nut trees, wheat, rye, and also nonglutinous grains such as millet have all developed phytates as a mechanism to ensure reproduction. Phytates are a plant's principle storage of phosphorus when bound to other minerals in the seed. Phosphorus is very important for germination and flowering, and specifically the formation of roots in new seedlings. This phosphorus isn't available to us, however, because plants prefer the energy it invests into making seed be used for its next generation (as opposed to hungry ol' you). If we were ruminants (think cow), we would produce the enzyme phytase that would help eliminate phytates. But without introducing a method to help surmount phytates, they may pose a threat to our digestion. This is particularly evident in individuals whose immune or digestive systems are already compromised by chronic illness or disease.

Not only do phytates safeguard phosphorus and present a digestion issue, they are also chelated, or bound with, other essentials, keeping them from being absorbed into our system. This may lead to nutritional deficiencies if your diet is high in whole grains. People who rely on grain as a primary means of sustenance, such as those in developing countries or on vegetarian diets, may also suffer the effects of this anti-nutrient that locks up the absorption of minor and macro minerals. All that iron, magnesium, calcium, and zinc you thought you were getting from store-bought whole wheat bread or ancient grains cereal? You are probably not absorbing much of it and possibly experiencing a tummy ache instead. The good news is that the lactic fermentation of sourdough helps to break down phytates and makes grains, seeds, and nuts of all types much more digestible and nutritious.

Sourdough is by no means a solution for those with grain allergies or celiac disease. It is, however, suitable for those who have certain intolerances and is much more nutritious than whole-grain breads leavened with conventional yeast. Studies have shown that sourdough lowers the glycemic index of white flour and makes whole grains much easier to assimilate by diminishing phytates present in grain and seed. Because phytates are broken down using lactic acid fermentation of sourdough, your body will be able to absorb important vitamins and minerals it wouldn't otherwise be able to harness with conventional yeast. When used in combination with soaking methods, bread made with sourdough is not only digestible but incredibly nutritious as well. And, perhaps just as important, incredibly tasty!

Over the last few years, I have given away starter to many people who have a curiosity because of its nutritional value or want to broaden their skills beyond commercial yeast. The biggest complaint I have heard since is that the starter doesn't get used often enough and instead becomes a Jar of Mystery lurking in the back of the refrigerator. After a few weeks of dormancy, doubt as to its efficacy creeps in for the newly acquainted, and often any potential for the deliciousness it offers is abandoned. Yet others who have used starter for many years to create crusty hearth breads have ventured little outside their comfort zone. Hopefully these recipes will guide you through more ways to use sourdough than the rewarding weekend loaf.

The benefits are many, including increased digestibility of flour as well as an added flavor profile. This unique culture complements many other ingredients besides grains, such as the robust flavors of chocolate, which pair naturally with the acidity of sourdough. But it will also add a rich complexity of flavor to many other traditional recipes as well, adding a toothsome texture to hearth loaves and a slight tang to piecrusts, barely detectable when filled with ripe, seasonal fruit. You may be surprised initially at the weight sourdough contributes to a few recipes that superficially resemble "fluff" as opposed to "food." As you incorporate this type of healthy baking into your repertoire, you will notice this texture reflects added nutritional value, and its density will be translated as a positive benefit.

Inspired Living

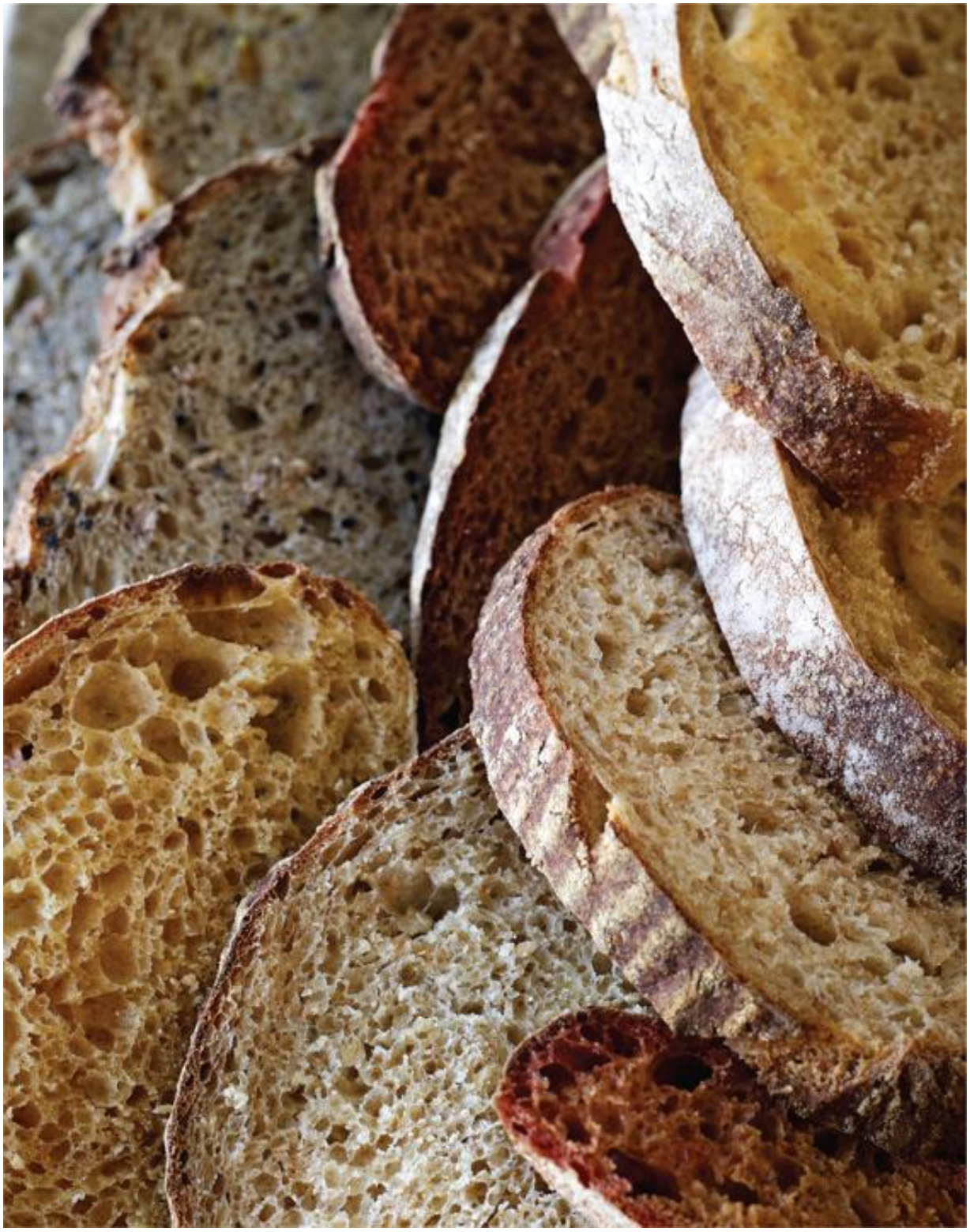
Do anything, but let it produce joy.
—Walt Whitman

To engage in baking with something unpredictable that responds to every slight difference in temperature, humidity, and—dare I say—even our mood requires some awareness. To become a better baker is to be fully present in the process from start to finish. This is an involved endeavor and

one that requires you to slow down and listen. You will become quite intimate with the more poetic elements of sourdough over time, engaging all your senses. Get used to sniffing your starter before and after a feed. Does it smell fruity or sour? Use your hands not only to guide the dough but also to measure its development.

Does it feel tight and excitable or loose and relaxed? Can you smell the caramelization as the bread nears the final few minutes of baking? Do you hear the crust whispering when it crackles and cools? Once you master the ability to gauge all of these elements, you will notice these developments influencing other areas of your life. You may become not only a better baker but quite possibly a closer friend, forgiving sibling, compassionate co-worker, or attuned lover (if you're lucky).

When we notice the subtle differences in each step we take, we allow ourselves to live an inspired life. We can achieve greater enjoyment in the smallest things and leave the bigger distractions of our daily chores behind. We can extend a nutritious and tasty meal to the people we love. Participating fully in process allows our food to not only please our stomachs but also warm the hearts of those with whom we share it.



Scheduling Sourdough in the Kitchen

Baking with sourdough is an occasion that allows you to multitask in the kitchen, home, and garden. Sourdough by its nature is a slow process that, thankfully, allows a great amount of inactive time. The schedule required to develop some recipes with long fermentation, especially in the breads of this book, is responsible for their remarkable flavor and digestibility. Once you get a handle on the performance of your starter, you may wish to alter some of the rising or proofing times to accommodate your agenda. For example, you may wish to refrigerate your dough in bulk stage before work, shaping when you return home. Most of the pastries in this book can also be made and frozen ahead of time, making a weekend brunch or afternoon tea a breeze.

Lengthy fermentation also makes some recipes more approachable for those with compromised digestion. If this is your concern, you may choose to ferment for longer times after mixing. However, be aware that, if a recipe calls for a quick leavening agent such as baking soda or powder, these will be weakened after 3 to 4 hours in a mixed batter. Longer ferments of certain bread doughs also will encourage a stronger sourdough flavor caused by the build-up of acetic and lactic acids, which you may or may not find pleasing.

Your starter's character will change over the course of the seasons, as will its performance and flavor characteristics. The chill of the winter months will require longer rising times, whereas summer baking will keep you on your toes. I encourage you to experience four seasons of baking. You will be required to react to unpredictable circumstances such as cool rainy days or hot, arid conditions, each occasion teaching you more about fermentation and the limitless kitchen ingredient known as sourdough.

Primordial Beginnings: Culturing Microbes

By adding water to flour, you are activating enzymes that convert starches to sugars—food for the billions of yeast and bacteria present all around us. Once this food source is available, these microbes easily multiply. Just a thimbleful of starter is all you need to create your own jar of activity, but creating your own starter isn't difficult. It requires humble ingredients and about a week to get going. Once it is bubbling and active, you will need to follow a maintenance schedule that is quite easy and flexible.

Making Your Own Starter

An interesting way to create a starter involves using raisins to create a yeast water. I call the resulting starter the Mother because it will give birth to the many different recipes in this book. An obscure practice in the United States, this method has been widely used in Europe, and I find it foolproof. It is how I chose to create my Mother, which has grown into a voraciously active presence in my kitchen.

The following measurements require a kitchen scale. This will ensure you are able to feed your starter with ample amounts of flour and water as well as maintain a true 100% hydration. (For more on digital scales, see this page.)

Ingredients:

Two 1-liter lidded glass or ceramic containers
685 g filtered water
150 g granulated sugar
65 g raw honey
225 g raisins
175 g bread flour

In a saucepan combine 570 g of the water and the sugar over low heat just until dissolved. Once cool, stir in the honey and add to one of your containers along with the raisins. I prefer to use glass containers with a latch top. Seal and place in a warmish location of your kitchen. On top of the refrigerator is often a nice spot—just don't forget about it!

Give the mixture a thorough shake several times a day for the next 5 to 7 days. After day 3 or 4 (depending on the ambient temperature of your kitchen) you'll begin to smell the presence of alcohol. The lid will pop when you open it, releasing carbon dioxide as a by-product of fermentation. This means fermentation is moving along as it should and you are on your way to a happy Mother! Leave the jar loosely covered with a lid at this point, allowing the mixture to "breathe."

After day 6 or 7, you should observe bubbles actively rising to the surface. This is an indication that your yeast water is ready. Add 60 g of this yeast water to 60 g of the bread flour in the other container (this is the jar that will house your starter). Stir until thoroughly mixed, and leave covered with a loose lid at room temperature for 8 hours or overnight. After this initial mixing, small bubbles will indicate signs of life. Add the remaining 115 g water and the remaining 115 g flour, position the lid, and allow to ferment at room temperature for another 8 hours. The excess yeast water can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge to use as a substitute for sweet cooking wine in stir-fries or given to a friend to use! It will keep for up to 6 months.

You now have your own Mother, kept alive by feedings of equal parts flour and water *by weight.* After several more feedings, when you drop a tablespoon of starter in a glass of water and it floats instead of sinks, your starter will be ready to leaven bread. Remember, once fed, your starter will double in size. Keep it in a container that will accommodate this expansion.

I like to keep about 150 g to 300 g of starter on hand at all times. If you bake less, you may only need half of that. Always refresh (feed) your remaining starter after using it in a recipe with an equal weight each of water and flour. If used often, it is possible to keep it on the kitchen counter and feed it 1 to 2 times per day. If you are only an occasional or weekend baker, the refrigerator is a better home for your starter. If kept chilled, your starter will remain in a semi-dormant state but will still need to be fed a minimum of once a week to keep it active.

Feeding (Refreshing) Your Starter

To perform a feeding regardless of storage method, simply discard half the amount and add water and flour in parts equal to or greater than the weight of the remaining starter. For example, if you have 100 g of starter left after you've discarded half, add at least 100 g water and 100 g flour to maintain a 100% hydration starter.

It's important not to starve your starter with a skimpy feeding, but it is OK to add more water and/or flour to bulk it up when planning a big batch of baking. This will result in a very mildly flavored starter.

If you are feeding a starter you'll be storing in the refrigerator, keep it at room temperature after a feeding and make sure it becomes active and bubbly before returning it to cold storage. This usually takes 5 to 8 hours, depending on the temperature of your kitchen. If you have kept your starter in the refrigerator for longer than a few days, it is preferable to give it two feedings at room temperature before making leaven. Many recipes in this book do not require fresh starter and are a great way to maximize the use of ingredients without letting anything go to waste.

Using a Variety of Flours in Starters

I prefer to maintain a starter made of white unbleached organic bread flour to build my whole-grain leaven. Each flour has different behavioral characteristics and will develop personalities reflecting their own microbial communities. For a long time I maintained many different starters, giving each a name, such as Jabba, the boisterous white starter who regularly outgrew his container. My rye Darth Vader had a more smoldering habit of activity, although his fruity, honeyed aroma was my preference. You can easily make spelt, rye, or whole wheat leaven using a white starter with a little time and patience. All the recipes in this book give you the instructions on how to do so, and if your refrigerator is constantly stuffed with other gourmet "experiments," you will appreciate maintaining only one jar!

Primordial Parallels and the Soil Food Web

Dark liquid gurgles in a 100-gallon tank, filling the cool autumn air with a fishy aroma. Suspended inside is a large teabag-like sack of compost, oat flour, and bark mulch, calibrated to a steady 72°F and aerated by several small pumps. It is not a popular smell with the general public but an important practice in the organic garden regimen at BBG.

This witch's brew is known as compost tea. Unlike the pleasant yogurt-like aroma of sourdough starter, compost tea is a beneficial microbial stink bath sometimes used in combination with fish emulsion or humic acid to encourage the health of plants and out-compete disease. Twenty-four hours from the time the tea is steeped, there are billions of invisible creatures ready to be distributed throughout the garden using a small tank and a pressure-sensitive apparatus. Compost tea can be used as a foliar application to liven up summer-weary plants or as a drench to balance the fungal and bacterial activity of soil. It is a tedious process, but doing it allows me to indulge in walking slowly and observing casually…a welcomed practice in the rose garden after the sweaty summer months of weed obsession and frenzied dead-heading.

You may be wondering what compost tea could possibly have in common with sourdough leavening, but surprisingly the concepts are similar. To be a successful gardener and a successful baker both, one must cultivate. This doesn't stop at tilling soil, weeding, or milling grain. One must cultivate microbes to make plants thrive and also to make bread rise. It is a lesson in both faith and patience for the invisible.

Part Two

THE RECIPES

4 | Autumn Harvest

BREADS

ROASTED CHESTNUT BREAD

BEET BREAD

BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND CHERRY BREAD

HARVEST BREAD WITH HARD SAUCE

SWEET POTATO LEVAIN

FRIENDSHIP LOAF

WILD RICE, HERB, AND ALMOND LEVAIN

CANDIED BACON CORNBREAD

CRANBERRY AND POPPY SEMOLINA BREAD

SAVORIES

POMEGRANATE AND ZAATAR-SPICED FOCACCIA

PIZZA CON FUNGHI SELVAGGI

SALSIFY LATKES

VEGETABLE BREADSTICKS

BLEU CHEESE AND WALNUT CRACKERS

CHICKEN, PURPLE POTATO, AND OLIVE EMPANADAS

BRAISED OXTAIL TACOS IN FLOUR TORTILLAS WITH KOHLRABI-CARROT SLAW

SWEETS

PEAR AND BUCKWHEAT CAKE

APPLE HAND-PIES WITH CHEDDAR CRUST

AUTUMN UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

BUCKWHEAT CREPES

CHOCOLATE GANACHE

PERSIMMON SPICE CAKE

COCONUT TAHINI BARS

GINGERBREAD CAKE

BAKED CARROT AND PINEAPPLE DOUGHNUTS WITH TAMARIND ICING

QUINCE AND WALNUT TEA COOKIES

THERE IS A CERTAIN LIGHT THAT IS CAST IN LATE AFTERNOON WHEN THE SCORCHING HEAT OF SUMMER FINALLY RELENTS. ROSES THAT WERE BLEACHED BY THE SUMMER SUN BLUSH DEEP WITH THE RETURN OF COOLER NIGHTS. THE CRUNCH OF DECAY underfoot and the sharp odor of gingko berries signal to the gardener that, finally, one can breathe deep the signs of change. The days are shortening, and it is time to reap the rewards of the season.

As one who works the soil, I find it difficult to choose a favorite time of the year. Winter's neutral landscape is ripe for creativity, but lengthy quiescence can persuade even the steadiest of character to fray with angst. Spreading yards of compost and rushing against time, spring is always too busy to take notice of anything other than ravishing hunger. The heat and humidity of summer encourage little but sipping chilled cocktails, beachcombing, and hiding under tree canopies.

Along comes autumn with its permission to feast and relax—ripe with sweet root vegetables, inspiring leaf patterns, and just enough chill to seek a little snuggling. Perhaps even spoiling your lucky chosen one with a fresh loaf of bread sweetened with butternut squash or the tempting fruit of the pomegranate. This is the season of reflection and an opportunity to return to the kitchen. The two complement each other well, allowing the momentum of summer's labor to culminate in recipes to celebrate harvest.

Roasted Chestnut Bread

Roasted Chestnut Bread

Makes 2 loaves

Once ripe, the chestnut's sharp capsule dehisces and reveals glossy brown nuts whose leathery shell can be peeled away from the starchy meat. Their sweet, crunchy, moist nutmeat is composed mostly of nutrient-rich complex carbohydrates. They are often sold in markets around the fall and winter holidays and can be roasted and chopped and then added to dressings, breads, and cakes or further dried and pounded into flour. Select nuts that are glossy, firm, and without the holes that may indicate worm activity. Once roasting, they impart a comforting aroma to the kitchen and have a delightfully mild but unparalleled flavor in this bread.

About 20 whole chestnuts

For the Leaven:
15 g 100% hydration starter
50 g water
50 g bread flour

For the Dough:
115 g leaven
465 g water
480 g bread flour
40 g chestnut flour
105 g rye flour
13 g sea salt

Roast the Chestnuts: Preheat your oven to 350°F. Use a paring knife to carefully score their shells with a wide X, about ⅛ inch deep, avoiding

cutting into the meat. This will encourage the shell to peel while roasting, making it easier to remove once cooled. Place in a rimmed sheet pan and roast for 30 to 35 minutes, until the shells begin to peel. Remove from the oven and let cool enough to handle. While they are still warm, use a knife to remove their shells and skins and discard. Coarsely chop the meat and set aside.

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. Stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When your leaven is bubbly and active, add the water to the leaven and stir. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix thoroughly with your hands, making sure the salt is completely incorporated. Fold in the roasted chestnuts. Cover and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough has almost doubled in size, turn out onto a lightly floured surface and divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape into your preferred form and place seam-side up into floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

***Castanea mollissima* (Chinese chestnut)**

As a child, I found the two large *Castanea mollissima* trees that shaded my family from the humid Tennessee heat to be a hazard to my fancy-free lifestyle. My days were mostly spent running barefoot around the property—except under their expansive canopy, where one negligent step meant days of a festering heel and needle prying. Come autumn, we would forgive this excessively spiny fruit, simply eating them raw, straight from the front yard.

Beet Bread

Beet Bread

Makes 2 loaves

Served with strong cheeses and currant jam or rubbed with a little garlic before toasting, this beautiful bread is sure to elicit puzzled and delighted looks from dinner guests. Their curiosity will be quelled by the beets' earthy character and natural sweetness.

My favorite method of slow-roasting beets: remove the leaves and scrub the roots clean, leaving the skins and tails intact, and cook them in a water-soaked clay baker. Once cooled, the skins slip off with a knife and their flesh will be moist and ready to process.

For the Beet Puree:

600 g (about 4 large) fresh beets

440 g water

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

60 g water

60 g bread flour

For the Dough:

150 g leaven

Beet puree (see left)

550 g bread flour

145 g whole wheat flour

35 g medium rye flour

15 g sea salt

Roast the Beets: Preheat your oven to 450°F and place the whole beets on a lined baking sheet or in a covered clay baking casserole. Roast for 45 to 60 minutes or until they are fork tender. Remove from the oven and allow to cool. Cut off the tails and peel off the skins. Put 290 g of the beets into a blender or food processor along with the water and blend into a smooth slurry.

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and stir until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: Pour the beet puree into the bowl with the leaven and stir to combine. Add the flours and mix with your hand until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes before adding the salt. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix thoroughly with your hands, making sure the salt is completely incorporated. Cover again with plastic and allow to bulk ferment for 3 to 4 hours, stretching and folding every 30 minutes to build dough strength.

Shape the Dough: Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and divide into two. Preshape, cover with plastic, and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape the dough and place seam-side up into well-floured and lined bannetons. Cover with a cloth and plastic and retard for 8 to 12 hours in the refrigerator.

Bake according to the instructions on this page. The natural sugar content of beets will encourage the crust to brown and darken quickly. Be sure to rotate the loaves accordingly throughout the bake.

***Beta vulgaris* (Common beet)**

Beta vulgaris is a cool-season member of the goosefoot family. It is an easy-to-grow crop that will benefit from early sowing in the spring or late-summer sowing for fall harvest. If you have heavy soil, work some compost and even a little sand in before planting to ensure the thick roots have the freedom to swell with sugars and nutrients, making this bread's flavor so distinctive. My favorite for the ornamental garden is the cultivar 'Bull's Blood,' adding a contrast of beautiful wine-colored foliage to the front of the border.

Butternut Squash and Cherry Bread

Butternut Squash and Cherry Bread

Makes 2 loaves

These large loaves are one of the most requested breads I make. Although butternut squash is called for, any winter squash or pumpkin will be tasty. Their dry flesh comes in a range of flavors, but I prefer silky, nutty-sweet butternut. Choose specimens that are heavy for their size. Slow-roasting the squash concentrates the natural sugars, which are further augmented by honey and dried fruit. I prefer to use cherries, but cranberries, golden raisins, or currants are reliable and tasty substitutes. A strong-flavored honey like buckwheat will add dimension, but a milder varietal will bring the fruit and squash flavors forward. The result is a tender and golden crumb beautifully laced with colors reflecting the seasonal leaf changes.

For the Butternut Puree:

500 g butternut squash

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter
60 g water
85 g bread flour

For the Dough:

175 g leaven
250 g butternut puree (see left)
355 g water
45 g mild honey
525 g bread flour
140 g whole wheat flour

30 g medium-grind rye flour
14 g sea salt

Fold-ins:
80 g dried cherries

Puree the Butternut Squash: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Cut the squash in half and scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Place cut-side-down on a greased baking sheet. Roast until tender to a fork, about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Allow to cool, and peel away any tough or burnt skin of the squash. Put the rest of the meat and skin in a food processor and puree until smooth.

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover with plastic and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is puffy and active, add 240 g of cooled puree and the water and honey to the leaven. Break the leaven apart with your fingers, then add the flours. Mix in all the flour until it is well hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for about 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix thoroughly with your hands, making sure the salt is completely incorporated. Fold in the cherries. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape in your preferred form and place seam-side up in a well-floured banneton or couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page. The natural sugar content of squash will encourage the crust to brown and darken quickly. Be sure to rotate the loaves accordingly throughout the bake, and lower the temperature of the oven if necessary.

Harvest Bread with Hard Sauce

Harvest Bread with Hard Sauce

Makes one 4¾ × 8¾-inch loaf

This sweet loaf is similar to a quick bread, keeps well, and, when baking, fills the house with warmth and tempting aromas of Thanksgiving. It is excellent served with a salty soft cheese to balance the earthy sweetness of the loaf and its sticky sauce.

This recipe is a three-step process that first requires you to make a parsnip and apple sauce. This can be done up to 2 weeks in advance. You need only about 130 g for the recipe, so stir the rest into yogurt and top with your favorite nuts and seeds for a simple and satisfying snack.

Note: When preparing this batter, you will use a *soaker*—a term used throughout this book—which helps to hydrate the ingredients, making for a more uniform and well-behaved mix. In this particular recipe, using brandy instead of water allows a rich, deep flavor to develop in the fruit.

For the Parsnip Applesauce:

200 g apple (about 2 small apples), chopped

250 g parsnips (about 3–4 medium parsnips), peeled and chopped

60 g water

45 g maple syrup

1 tsp. ground coriander

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1 tsp. orange zest

60 g brandy

For the Soaker:

225 g dried figs
60 g dried currants
50 g brandy

For the Batter:
145 g white kamut flour
90 g whole kamut flour
½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground clove
½ tsp. sea salt
2 large eggs, beaten
80 g muscovado (or raw) sugar
45 g extra-virgin olive oil
90 g maple syrup
130 g parsnip applesauce
(see above)
115 g 100% hydration starter
Soaker (see above)

For the Hard Sauce:
60 g unsalted butter
60 g powdered sugar
15 g fresh orange juice
25 g brandy
1 tsp. orange zest

Prepare the Parsnip Applesauce: Combine all the ingredients except the brandy in a medium saucepan, stirring to coat the parsnips and apples. Over medium-low heat cook until tender (about 10 to 12 minutes), being mindful

to stir often. Once the liquid has evaporated, reduce the heat to low and add the brandy. Cook for another 2 to 3 minutes until the parsnips are tender to a fork. Transfer to a food processor and carefully process the hot mixture until a smooth sauce forms, scraping down the sides as needed. Let cool, then transfer to an airtight container and store in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

Make the Soaker: At least 2 to 3 hours before you mix your batter (or the night before), remove the fig stems and coarsely chop the figs. In a small bowl, stir the figs, currants, and brandy together. Cover and allow to sit, stirring occasionally.

Make the Bread: Preheat your oven to 400°F and grease your loaf pan. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, baking powder and soda, spices, and salt. Set aside. In a separate bowl, combine the eggs and sugar and beat until thick. Add the oil, maple syrup, and 130 g of parsnip applesauce and beat until frothy. Add the starter to the liquid mixture and beat with a fork until all the starter is homogenized into the liquid. Toss in the fruit and brandy soaker and give a few more turns with a wooden spoon. Fold in the dry ingredients and stir to combine. Fill your tin with the batter and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Make the Hard Sauce: While the loaf is baking, prepare the hard sauce. Combine all ingredients in a heavy saucepan and heat on low. Stir until the butter is melted and the orange zest is aromatic, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Place the cooling loaf on a plate and pierce with a toothpick on the top and sides. Drizzle the glaze in batches over the loaf, allowing the loaf to soak it in before adding more. Turn to coat the sides, rubbing in any extra glaze that has collected on the plate. Continue until all glaze has been used. This loaf will keep for several days if stored in an airtight container.

Sweet Potato Levain

Sweet Potato Levain

Makes 2 loaves

Ipomoea batatas is a species in the Convolvulaceae family whose starchy and edible tuberous root is most commonly known as the sweet potato. This attractive plant is much like the rest of its showy relatives, with heart-shaped leaves acting as a beautiful backdrop for the white, pale pink, or lavender flowers resembling little twisted funnels. There is much confusion over sweet potatoes and their relationship to other edible tubers; these buttery rich staples of the autumn and winter pantry are actually not botanically akin to yams (the Dioscoreaceae family) or common potatoes (the Solanaceae family).

For the Sweet Potato Puree:

370 g sweet potato (about 1 large potato)

For the Leaven:

50 g 100% hydration starter

50 g water

50 g bread flour

For the Dough:

150 g leaven

340 g water

180 g sweet potato puree (see left)

10 g molasses

450 g bread flour

120 g whole wheat flour

30 g rye flour

12 g sea salt

Make the Sweet Potato Puree: Preheat your oven to 425°F. Wash and scrub your sweet potatoes and place on a lined sheet pan. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes, until soft to a fork. Allow to cool until you are able to handle them comfortably, peeling away the skin. Measure 180 g into a food processor or blender and process into a puree. Refrigerate until you are ready to mix the dough.

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, add the water, 180 g sweet potato puree, and molasses to the leaven. Add the flours and mix with your hand until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 minutes.

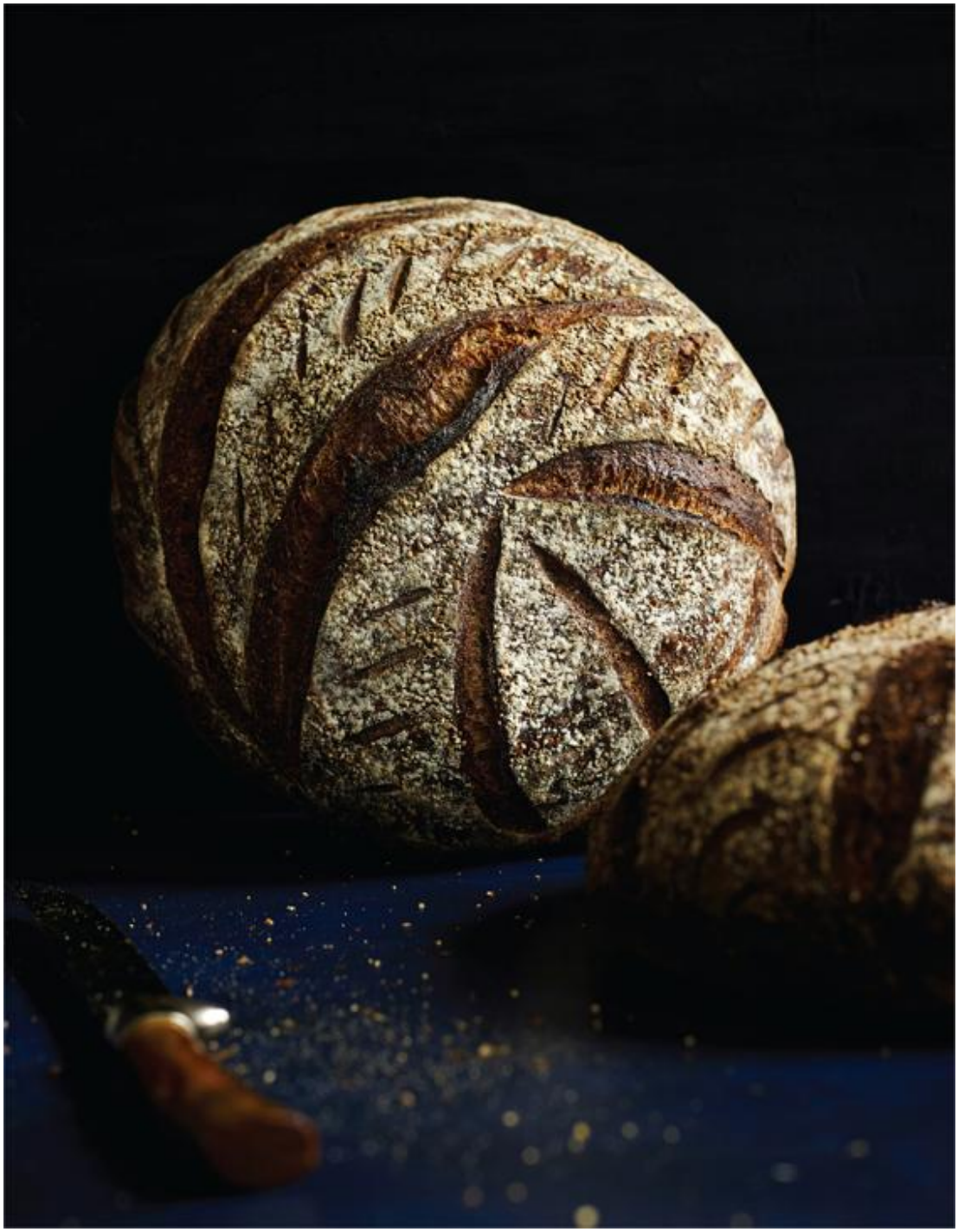
Shape the Dough: When the dough feels puffy and has almost doubled in size, divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes before final shaping. Place the shaped loaves seam-side up into floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic before placing in the fridge for 8 to 12 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page. The natural sugar content of sweet potatoes encourages the crust to brown and darken quickly. Make sure to rotate the loaves accordingly throughout the bake.

***Ipomoea batatas* (Sweet potato)**

There is a surprising diversity of foliage, flesh, and skin colors within this singular species. I have grown a number of different varieties of *Ipomoea batatas*, all hailing to tropical or semitropical climates, both ornamental

and edible. The more showy cultivars that have been developed for their bright chartreuse or deep-wine-colored foliage produce surprisingly pink-skinned fat tubers that have a dry, starchy texture once cooked. These exotic spicy varieties are unlike the ones used in this recipe but are delicious prepared in Caribbean cuisine, where their peculiar personality is appropriate. Sweet potatoes most commonly available to us are the moist and softer varieties more fitting here. Once roasted and mashed, their flavor becomes concentrated in the bread.



Friendship Loaf

Friendship Loaf

Makes 2 loaves

Many of my customers have sought my bread because they have special dietary needs stemming from digestive disorders or intolerances. One such person, who has consequently become a cherished friend, made a special request for a nutless and seedless loaf with extended fermentation and modest whole grains. This was a bit of a challenge, as whole grains often speed up the fermentation process by providing copious amounts of the starches preferred by sourdough microflora. With a slight addition of buckwheat, I found the desired mouthfeel and flavor without sacrificing the ability to retard the dough for up to 36 hours in a refrigerator.

This is a very moist dough, and handling it takes a little getting used to. Remember that your dough scraper is your best friend and try to resist adding too much extra flour in the final shaping. When baked in a Dutch oven, its rise and the caramelization of its crust are beautiful to behold.

For the Leaven:

25 g 100% hydration starter
70 g water
70 g bread flour

For the Dough:

165 g leaven
640 g water
615 g bread flour
80 g medium rye flour
80 g whole wheat flour

25 g buckwheat flour
16 g sea salt

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and stir until smooth. Cover with plastic and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, add the water and stir to combine. Add the flours and mix with your hands until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes to 1 hour. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Cover and allow to bulk ferment for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough has almost doubled in size, divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes before final shaping. Form into your preferred final shape and place seam-side up in well-floured linen-lined bannetons. Retard in the fridge for up to 36 hours before baking.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain

Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain

Makes 2 loaves

Zizania, or wild rice, is a genus of the grass family that grows in slow-moving water or lakes. Three species of wild rice are native to North America, one of which is in danger of extinction in Texas. The most common species cultivated for its nutritional value and taste is *Zizania palustris*, which was harvested by Native Americans using specialized threshing tools that deposited the grain directly into their canoes with a gentle knock. Since then, it has become a popular food that is now cultivated commercially, most notably in the United States as well as Canada.

You might be surprised to discover that, although they share the same family, wild rice is not directly related to Asian rice, *Oryza.* Described as various species and colors including nutty and nutritious red rice, Asian *Oryza* can be used in addition to wild rice in this recipe to lend a beautiful color and flavor to the crumb. If you have a few fresh herbs holding up in the garden, harvest them and add to the mildly nutty flavor of almond for a delicious, hearty treat.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

30 g water

30 g bread flour

For the Dough:

90 g leaven

320 g water

320 g bread flour

85 g whole wheat flour

20 g rye flour
9 g sea salt

Fold-ins:
85 g cooked wild or red rice, or both
45 g almond slivers, toasted
1½ Tbsp. chopped fresh herbs, plus a few whole leaves for garnish

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover with plastic and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, add the water to the leaven and stir to combine. Add the flours and mix until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix thoroughly with your hands, making sure the salt is completely incorporated. Fold in the cooked rice, almonds, and herbs making sure they are evenly distributed throughout the dough. Allow to bulk ferment for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and divide in half. Preshape, cover with plastic, and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Place whole leaves of washed and dry herbs in the center of your lined and floured banneton. Perform the final shaping and place the loaves into the bannetons, seam-side up. Cover with a cloth and plastic and retard overnight in the refrigerator.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Candied Bacon Cornbread

Candied Bacon Cornbread

Makes one 9-inch pan

This recipe's spirit conjures my paternal grandmother, Granny Owens, who inspires most of my Southern-style cooking. She often made skillet cornbread with cracklings, otherwise known as fried pigskin. It was robustly flavorful when served alongside ham 'n' beans with chow-chow relish. Cracklings are not the easiest to find these days, so I use bacon, but I candy it first. The acidity of pickled jalapeños takes the edge off the sweetness, if you need it.

Put a few moist slices of the cornbread on the grill before serving, or serve with a side of sautéed chard or kale. Blue cornmeal has a wonderfully nutty flavor that is excellent in this recipe, but medium-grind yellow cornmeal is delicious as well. The key to getting a nice crispy crust is to use an already hot cast-iron muffin pan or skillet.

6 slices uncooked bacon
90 g maple syrup
30 g brown sugar
240 g cornmeal
1 tsp. sea salt
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
30 g unsalted butter, melted, or bacon pan drippings
160 g whole milk
2 large egg, beaten
150 g 100% hydration starter
40 g pickled jalapeños, drained and chopped (optional)
1 sprig of rosemary or sage (optional)

Preheat your oven to 425°F and generously grease a cast-iron skillet. Put the skillet in the oven to heat. Place the bacon in a separate skillet and cook over medium-low heat until the fat begins to melt. Add 60 g of the maple syrup and the brown sugar and continue to cook until caramelized and slightly crispy. Drain on a paper-towel-lined plate and set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the cornmeal, salt, and baking powder and soda. In a separate large bowl, combine the melted butter (or drippings), milk, remaining 30 g of the maple syrup, and egg. Mix until combined and then add the starter. Combine with a fork until the starter is completely homogenized into the liquids.

Add the dry ingredients into the wet a few batches at a time, stirring to combine. Cut the bacon into ½-inch pieces and fold into the batter, along with the pickled jalapeños (if using).

Carefully pour the batter into the preheated skillet and press the herb sprigs into the top of the batter, if using. Bake for 20 to 22 minutes, until the surface is golden brown and the bread has pulled away from the edges.

Cranberry and Poppy Semolina Bread

Cranberry and Poppy Semolina Bread

Makes 2 loaves

As one who has taught myself this craft, I have taken much inspiration from the great bakers who have published instructional books over the past thirty years. Each source has influenced my own approach, with a few voices speaking louder than others. Jeffrey Hamelman has been particularly inspiring, with his straightforward language and masterful techniques. I have always admired his use of different leavening with distinctive flours and various hydrations to pull certain flavors and textures from the flour. This recipe is an adaptation of his semolina bread that I have reformulated with the addition of whole wheat flour, cranberries, and poppy seeds. The result has a vibrant texture and a golden, jammy, and slightly more open crumb.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter
55 g water
45 g bread flour

For the Dough:

130 g leaven
435 g water
320 g coarse semolina flour
235 g bread flour
70 g whole wheat flour
13 g sea salt
1½ Tbsp. poppy seeds
195 g dried cranberries

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven has turned into liquid and is bubbly and active, add the water and stir to combine. Add the flours and mix with your hand until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes before adding the salt. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix thoroughly with your hands, making sure the salt is completely incorporated. Fold in the poppy seeds and cranberries until they are evenly distributed. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk ferment for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding at 30-minute intervals.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, turn out onto a well-floured surface. Divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape according to your preference and place into well-floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Pomegranate and Zaatar-Spiced Focaccia

Pomegranate and Zaatar-Spiced Focaccia

Makes two 8½ × 10-inch flatbreads

I have always had a taste for the exotic, and that preference is reflected in the ingredients of this recipe. As a curious amateur cook just out of college, I took a job at a Persian restaurant. I was working professionally as a studio artist but craved the social exposure of a kitchen and wanted to learn the language of this ancient cuisine. The menu included traditional Iranian preparations but also introduced other Middle Eastern ingredients such as pomegranate molasses, rose water, and *zaatar* spice mix.

The chef was an intelligent and easily amused Iranian whose family I helped move countless times to avoid overstayed visas and resulting INS scruples. In exchange for the use of my truck and a helping hand, we sat down at a large round table with three generations of his family to enjoy traditional snacks and conversation. I participated with respectful observation and learned to take tea and rose water sweets. I was introduced to casual traditions of a culture I had little experience with otherwise and cultivated reverence for their rituals.

Pomegranate molasses and zaatar are keepsakes of my time in that kitchen. You should be able to source these versatile ingredients at any Middle Eastern store or online. Atop this pillowy layer of flatbread, their bright flavors will improve any rainy autumn day.

For the Leaven:

60 g 100% hydration starter

60 g water

60 g bread flour

For the Dough:

180 g leaven
485 g water
20 g extra-virgin olive oil
300 g bread flour
300 g Antimo Caputo “00” flour
40 g whole spelt flour
14 g sea salt

For the Topping:

365 g onions (3–4 small onions), sliced
170 g extra-virgin olive oil
1½ tsp. salt
60–80 g pomegranate molasses
3 Tbsp. zaatar spice mix
Arils (seeds) from ½ of a large fresh pomegranate
2–3 Tbsp. chopped fresh herbs, such as parsley or mint

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. Stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When your leaven is bubbly and active, add the water and oil to the leaven and stir. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix thoroughly with your hands, making sure the salt is completely incorporated. Cover and allow to bulk proof for 2 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours.

Prepare the Onions: Place the onions and oil into a heavy skillet and sprinkle with salt. Cook over medium-low flame, stirring occasionally, until

the onions are golden and just beginning to brown around the edges, about 20 minutes. Take off the heat and refrigerate until ready to use.

Assemble the Focaccia: Remove the dough from the refrigerator and turn out onto a well-floured surface. Gently pat into a large rectangle, being careful not to deflate the dough. Cut in half using your bench knife and transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Using your fingertips, make indentations into the dough that will act as wells for the oil. Layer the onions and their oil onto the two focaccias, then drizzle on the pomegranate molasses and sprinkle the zaatar spice over the top. The amount of oil will seem excessive, but the dough will absorb most of it as it bakes. Cover loosely with plastic and allow to final proof at room temperature for 1 to 1½ hours, until puffy and expanded. Preheat your oven to 450°F during this time.

When the loaves are fully proofed, place them into the preheated oven. Bake for 10 minutes and then lower the temperature to 430°F. Rotate and bake for another 10 to 12 minutes, until the edges are golden and crispy. Remove from the pan and cool on a wire rack. Garnish with fresh pomegranate and chopped herbs. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Pizza con Funghi Selvaggi

Pizza con Funghi Selvaggi

Makes one 10-inch pizza

Many moons ago, I engaged in the romantic pursuit of a man living in Milan. That October, I crossed the Atlantic in one of the most memorable travels of my life. Much to my benefit, he revealed the best of Northern Italy during the height of truffle season; it was a decadent adventure, which cultivated a deep love for many regional specialties while engaging in other very Italianate activities. I drove fast cars through the winding Riviera highways, made love on the steep slopes of a Piemonte vineyard, and feasted like a countess. Consequently, I flew home to Brooklyn with a deep appreciation for *la dolce vita.*

This recipe boasts robust flavors with a spotlight on its prize ingredient: the wild mushroom. Carefully forage whatever is available, using the expertise of books or your personal Italian tour guide if you are new to this activity. If you are shopping at the market instead, select a variety of flavors and textures.

Fortunately Robiola Piemonte can be sourced fairly easily from a discriminating cheese monger. This is a rather generic name for a cheese that can be made from cow or ewe's milk and is sold at various ripeness. For this recipe, you want a block that is fairly advanced but still firm. Its strong flavor is perfect with such earthy ingredients as wild mushrooms.

Finally, farro flour (see notes about farro on this page) is truly what gives this pizza its Italian connotations. This is a crust that lends itself to a delightfully crispy texture when stretched thin.

For the Dough:

30 g 100% hydration starter, refreshed (fed)
135 g water
½ Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
120 g Antimo Caputo “00” flour
60 g coarse farro flour
Generous pinch of sea salt

For the Toppings:
30 g extra-virgin olive oil
2 generous handfuls of wild mushrooms
200 g fresh, whole milk ricotta (optional)
4–5 slices of prosciutto (optional)
5–6 medium Brussels sprouts, shaved
125–150 g Robiola cheese
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary or tarragon

Build the Dough: Six hours before baking your pizza, mix together the starter, water, and oil in a small bowl. Add the flours and salt and mix until the flour is completely hydrated and a soft dough forms. Remove the dough from the bowl, clean the bowl and lightly oil it, and replace the dough, rolling it around to coat. Cover with plastic and leave at room temperature until the dough has roughly doubled in size.

Prepare the Pizza: Preheat your baking stone to 550°F (or as hot as you can get it!) and prepare the pizza crust. Remove the dough from the bowl and pat out onto a well-floured surface. Press from the center outward using floured fingertips, careful to leave an untouched and puffy lip. It will feel loose, unlike most conventional pizza dough. When it is about half the size you desire, dust a piece of parchment generously with cornmeal and transfer the dough. Continue working out the dough on the parchment until you are satisfied with the thickness of the crust.

Toss the oil and mushrooms together. Spread the ricotta in an even layer over the crust and arrange the prosciutto over it. Lift the mushrooms out of

the oil and layer them on top. Toss the shaved Brussels sprouts in the remaining oil and sprinkle over the mushrooms. Top with generous dollops of Robiola cheese and chopped rosemary.

If boldly skipping the parchment and instead of preparing the pie directly on your peel, shake to make sure it doesn’t stick before attempting to load into the oven. Otherwise, transfer the pie by the parchment onto the preheated hearthstone. Bake for 12 to 14 minutes, until the cheese is bubbly and the crust is golden. If you desire a more charred flavor, remove the parchment paper and finish under the broiler for the last 2 to 3 minutes.

Salsify Latkes

Makes ten 3½-inch latkes

I discovered salsify in a desperate moment at the farmer's market. Unassuming and quietly taking up a corner of my favorite stand, these dirty, slim roots had an uninspiring presence. There really wasn't much to choose from at this point in December other than the usual characters: tired spuds, winter squashes, garlic, and onions. So I took the risk. It turned out to be a lesson in the rewards of looking beyond (deceiving) appearances.

This pancake-like recipe has become one of my favorite fall and winter savory side dishes. It can also serve as a hearty vegetarian meal topped with avocado and a mild sauce that won't overpower the latke's subtle flavors.

100 g 100% hydration starter
2 large eggs
160 g salsify root, peeled and grated
50 g leeks, cleaned and sliced very thinly
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
4 Tbsp. fresh herbs of choice, such as chives, basil, or mint
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
110 g fine bread crumbs
30 g extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat your oven to 375°F. In a medium bowl, beat together the starter and eggs with a fork until completely combined. Add the rest of the ingredients except the olive oil and mix until combined. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium-low

and, working in batches, spoon large drops of the mix onto the skillet, using your spoon or a spatula to spread them into a round form. Sear the latke patties for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, until a nice skin forms. Transfer to a lined sheet pan and finish in the oven for about 15 minutes. Serve warm.

***Tragopogon* (Salsify)**

Tragopogon is a genus belonging to the dandelion family grown for its tender leaves, attractive flowers, and long, thin taproots. When the root is peeled and sliced, a milky white sap is revealed. There are several different edible species that fall under this genus, and they are all delicious, with a root that some say resembles the flavor of an oyster, though I find this comparison a bit of a stretch.

Vegetable Breadsticks

Vegetable Breadsticks

Makes 3 to 4 dozen

These breadsticks are inspired by a recipe from Martha Stewart, whom I had the chance to meet some years ago when I made an appearance on a Mother's Day show. She has always impressed me with her expansive knowledge of the garden, and I equally admire her prowess in the kitchen. Many of her cookbooks and magazines grace my shelves, and I find them excellent references for techniques and crafty ideas. A colorful sight to behold, these breadsticks are perfect for entertaining and can be dipped into hummus or wrapped with cured meats to make an easy finger food. If you don't have a juicer at home, purchase the vegetable juices fresh from a health food store.

For the Dough:

280 g bread flour

Generous pinch of sea salt

45 g duck fat, lard, or coconut oil

Ingredients from one of the variations below

55 g 100% hydration starter

For the Seeded Variation:

140 g water

2 tsp. *Nigella* seeds (see this page), sesame seeds, or flaxseeds

For the Carrot Variation:

140 g fresh carrot juice

½ tsp. ground turmeric

For the Parsley Variation:

140 g fresh parsley juice, strained

For the Beet Variation:
140 g fresh beet juice

In a large bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flour and salt. Cut or pulse in the fat until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add the ingredients for one of the variations (seeded, carrot, parsley, or beet) and the starter and stir or pulse until the dough comes together. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until an even color is achieved. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof at room temperature for 3 hours.

Preheat your oven to 400°F. Form the dough into a small rectangle and roll to a ¼-inch thickness. Cut the dough lengthwise into ¼-inch-wide strips. With your hands, gently roll each strip until it is about 16 inches long. Place on a lined sheet pan so that the dough sticks are close but not touching. Bake for 14 to 18 minutes, until firm. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. These will keep well stored in an airtight container for several days.

Bleu Cheese and Walnut Crackers

Bleu Cheese and Walnut Crackers

Makes 20 to 25 crackers

These crackers resemble a shortbread dough because of their high butter content. When sliced thin and baked until golden, they have a delicious, savory crunch that lends well to a vast array of toppings. Some of my favorites include caper berries, pickled plums, and honeyed apple compote.

85 g unsalted butter, softened
100 g semisoft bleu cheese
60 g 100% hydration starter
60 g whole wheat pastry flour
½ tsp. salt
60 g walnuts
1 egg yolk
Dash of cream

Place the butter and bleu cheese in the bowl of a food processor and combine until smooth. Add the starter and pulse until roughly combined. Add the flour and salt and pulse until the dough just starts to come together. Turn it out onto a well-floured surface and knead gently a few times, just until the dough is consistent. Roll into a log, roughly 2 inches in diameter, then wrap it in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or until very firm. Alternatively, keep the dough wrapped and chilled for up to 2 days.

Preheat your oven to 425°F and chop the walnuts into small pieces. Remove the log from the refrigerator and allow to soften slightly, about 5 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream to make an egg wash. Brush the log with the egg wash, then roll it in the chopped walnuts, pressing lightly. Slice the log as thinly as possible with a sharp knife for

maximum crispiness. If you prefer your crackers with a softer, chewy center, the dough can be sliced a bit thicker and will take a few minutes longer to bake.

Bake for 10 to 13 minutes, until the edges are golden brown and crispy. Remove from oven and cool on a wire rack.

Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas

Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas

Makes about 10 small empanadas

Puff pastry has the erroneous reputation of being difficult to work with. The dough is sensitive to temperature fluctuations, sure, and unless you enjoy the sensual slipperiness of a buttered counter, I don't recommend you torture yourself with this recipe on an overly hot day. When your kitchen is cool and the oven resting, gather your ingredients and put on some nice mellow tunes. Burn a candle, chant a song—whatever you need to let go of puff-pastry anxiety!

I have made this recipe as fail-proof as possible; it should yield a nice volume with minimal effort. Bread flour is called for, but I have also substituted half with a whole-grain flour such as spelt or whole wheat with great success and improved flavor. Both lard and butter are used to get the flakiest results, but if you do not eat pig, an all-butter pastry will work as well. The key is allowing the dough to rest at periodic intervals. After making this a few times, you'll know when the dough says to walk away, and you'll be relieved that puff pastry can be so deliciously easy.

For the Rough Puff Pastry:

195 g bread flour

1 tsp. sea salt

115 g cold unsalted butter, grated

115 g frozen leaf lard, grated

100 g 100% hydration starter

30 g vodka, ice cold

60–70 g water, ice cold

For the Filling:

2 tsp. olive oil
40 g onions, diced
¾ tsp. ground cumin
1 garlic clove, finely diced
½ tsp. salt
95 g purple potatoes (about 3 small potatoes), cut into ¼-inch pieces
65 g chicken stock
85 g cooked chicken, shredded and chopped
45 g red bell pepper, chopped
20 g pitted green olives
20 g golden raisins
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro

For the Egg Wash:

Yolk of 1 large egg
Dash of heavy cream

Prepare the Rough Puff: Whisk the flour and salt together in a medium bowl. Toss in the grated butter and lard. Add the starter and gently combine until a rough dough comes together. Turn out onto a floured surface and sprinkle the vodka over the dough. Add the water a spoonful at a time, using a dough scraper to help turn the dough until a stiff, cohesive mass

forms. Do not smear the butter into the dough; you want to see a marbled pattern. Flatten and shape into a rectangle then cover with plastic. Allow to rest in the fridge for at least 30 minutes and up to 12 hours.

Remove the dough from the plastic and place on a lightly floured surface. With a floured rolling pin, roll the rectangle in one direction to about three times its length, using more flour if needed. Fold like a letter, first the top third down and then the bottom third up. Rotate a quarter turn and repeat the rolling and folding process. (If your kitchen is warm and the butter is beginning to melt, return the dough to the fridge for at least 30 minutes before the second rolling.) Cover again with plastic and allow to rest in the fridge for at least another 30 minutes before rolling for use.

Prepare the Filling: In a large skillet, heat the oil and add the onions and cumin, cooking until the onions are translucent, about 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the garlic and salt and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the potatoes and stock and cook until the potatoes are soft. Stir in the chicken, pepper, olives, and raisins and cook until the raisins are plump and the chicken is heated through. Turn off the heat and set aside to cool. Stir in the cilantro.

Assemble the Empanadas: Remove the pastry dough from the fridge and allow to soften for about 5 minutes. Preheat your oven to 425°F. On a floured surface, roll the pastry to about a ⅛-inch thick. Using a 3½-inch round form, cut out as many circles as you can. Re-roll the scraps and continue to cut out circles until all the dough is used. Whisk together the eggs and the cream for the egg wash. Spoon some of the chicken filling onto half of a circle and brush the edges with the egg wash. Fold the dough over the filling and seal the edges with a fork. Continue to fill empanadas, placing them onto a sheet pan. Apply a light egg wash over the empanadas.

Bake for 23 to 25 minutes, until golden brown, rotating the pan halfway through for an even bake. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Braised Oxtail Tacos in Flour Tortillas with Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw

Braised Oxtail Tacos in Flour Tortillas with Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw

Makes 12 tacos

Flour tortillas are versatile and easy to make. Best served immediately from the griddle, they are delicious stuffed with a variety of sautéed veggies or slow-braised meats. This recipe takes a bit of time to assemble the components, but the resulting flavors are impressively bold, satisfying, and worth the effort. The Asian-inspired ingredients can be adapted to most dark meats, so if you cannot source oxtail, trying substituting with beef shank instead.

For the Oxtail:

1.8 kg (4 lb.) oxtail pieces
Salt and black pepper
30 g unsalted butter
115 g cooking wine
40 g fresh orange juice
20 g soy sauce
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger, grated
4 whole star anise
2 cinnamon sticks
30 g beef stock
1 tsp. hot sauce

For the Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw:

1 large kohlrabi, peeled
1 apple

3 small carrots
3 green onions
Juice of 1 lime
1 tsp. apple cider vinegar
1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 Tbsp. fish sauce
10 g mild honey
1 tsp. red pepper flakes

For the Flour Tortillas:
210 g all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. sea salt
15 g duck fat or lard
100 g 100% hydration starter
115 g water

Optional Garnishes: Avocado, fresh herbs (cilantro, mint, and lemon balm work well), lime wedges, radishes, and hot sauce

Prepare the Oxtail: Preheat your oven to 275°F. Season the oxtail with salt and pepper. On the stovetop, melt the butter in a Dutch oven. Brown the meat on all sides and remove from the pan. Deglaze the pan by adding the wine and stir. Add the orange juice, soy sauce, garlic, and spices and bring to a simmer. Add the meat back to the pot along with the broth and hot sauce and place in the preheated oven. Cook for 4 to 5 hours, until tender to a fork and falling away from the bone. Remove from the oven and let cool enough to handle. Tear the meat away from the bone into small chunks and set aside.

Prepare the Slaw: Slice the kohlrabi, apple, carrots, and onions into thin strips. Toss with the rest of the ingredients and set aside.

Make the Tortillas: Whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. Add the fat and rub in with your fingers until the mixture resembles cornmeal. Add the starter and water and mix until consistently combined. Remove the dough from the bowl and gently knead into a ball. Make 12 smaller balls of equal size and cover with plastic. Heat a cast-iron pan over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium and, using a rolling pin, roll out the tortillas to 4 to 5 inches in diameter. Place the tortillas in a pan one at a time and cook until they are puffy and browning on each side. Do not overcook or they will become tough and crunchy.

To prepare the tacos, fill the creases of the tortillas with meat, top with slaw, and garnish with fresh herbs and any other favorite toppings.

Pear and Buckwheat Cake

Pear and Buckwheat Cake

Makes one 9-inch cake

Fagopyrum esculentum, or buckwheat, is an annual species of the rhubarb family whose fruits are harvested and eaten mostly as a cereal or ground into a dark-colored flour. It has no gluten and contains about 75% starch and 11% protein and is particularly rich in lysine. It grows quickly and can tolerate poor-quality soils. I find its pretty, heart-shaped leaves and airy, small white flowers a particularly pleasing addition to any garden.

Buckwheat can be eaten any time of the year, of course, but it may be most appreciated in the autumn for its earthy character. Pear and almonds mellow the strong flavor of buckwheat, but if you would like an extra pop of flavor, stir 75 grams of fresh cranberries into the batter before baking. This moist cake keeps well, but I enjoy toasting it after a day or two and pairing it with soft cheese.

170 g buckwheat flour
50 g almond flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground ginger
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
½ tsp. salt
115 g unsalted butter, softened
165 g raw sugar
2 large eggs
1 tsp. almond extract

100 g 100% hydration starter

1 pear, cored and sliced into ¼-inch wedges

25 g sliced almonds (optional)

Preheat your oven to 375°F and generously grease a cake tin or cast-iron skillet. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, baking powder and soda, spices, and salt. In a large bowl, combine the butter, sugar, and eggs using a handheld mixer. Add the almond extract and beat until combined. Using a fork, beat in the starter until it is completely incorporated. Fold the dry into the wet ingredients, a third at a time. Pour the batter into your pan and decorate with wedges of pear and sliced almonds if desired.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until the edges begin to brown and pull away from the pan and a toothpick tests clean. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust

Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust

Makes nine 3½-inch pies

The concept of a little pocket of crust enveloping softened fresh fruit is completely adaptable to most seasons. The robust savory flavors of sharp cheese are cut by the slightly acidic notes of tart apple. Pippins have become my heirloom variety of choice, with their yellowish firm flesh and complex resinous flavor. They also keep well in storage. But any tart variety with firm flesh will do, such as the early-season Lodi or the universal Granny Smith. Combining these with other, sweeter apples such as Jonagold or Golden Delicious will give these pies complexity. If blackberries are still ripening as the apple harvest comes in, replace some of the weight of the apples with a handful of berries for extra flourish.

I first developed this recipe after returning from a trip to Morocco, loaded with exotic spice blends. One of my favorites (perhaps worth a return trip) was a mix labeled by an engaging vendor as simply *mélange pour fruit.* Each *herboriste* in the medina had his own secretive custom blends of spices that uniquely distinguished his style. The *epices* of this particular mix were finely ground and included notes of cinnamon and star anise, and lent a slightly golden color to the apple flesh, suggesting a bit of turmeric was involved. But there was one elusive whiff that I couldn't quite nail with my nose. On further investigation into North African spice blends, I discovered a species of culinary pepper that was new to me: *Piper longum.* Sometimes referred to as Indian long pepper, it is the fruit of a flowering vine in the pepper family that has a flavor similar to the familiar black pepper but with an additional musky fire. More than just the one hit of a little heat, long pepper is a party in your mouth, possessing nuances of cardamom, nutmeg, and tobacco. I believe the inclusion in this blend is what made these hand-pies so special. I

have since sourced it at some Indian groceries here in New York, but it can be a somewhat obscure ingredient to find.

If you can't get your hands on long pepper, grains of paradise (another exotic spice indigenous to West Africa), galangal, or even freshly ground black pepper will do. I like to make this blend in large batches to keep on hand for all kinds of desserts. It is also excellent sprinkled on fresh orange slices for a simple end to a meal.

For the Crust:

190 g all-purpose flour
95 g whole wheat pastry flour
30 g granulated sugar
½ tsp. sea salt
115 g cold unsalted butter, cut into chunks
90 g cold leaf lard, cut into chunks
45 g sharp Cheddar cheese, grated
115 g 100% hydration starter
30–40 g vodka or water

For the Fruit Filling:

300 g tart apples (2–3 apples)
60 g mild honey
¾ tsp. ground cinnamon
2–3 whole star anise
½ tsp. ground cardamom
½ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
½ tsp. ground long pepper
⅛ tsp. ground cloves
Small pinch of ground turmeric

To Finish:

1 large egg yolk
Dash of cream
30 g coarse sugar

Prepare the Crust: In a large bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flours, sugar, and salt. Cut or pulse in the butter, lard, and cheese until the mixture resembles coarse, pea-sized crumbs. Add the starter and vodka and stir or pulse until the dough comes together. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and form the dough into two equal-sized small rectangles. Cover with plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 2 days.

Make the Filling: In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, stir together the apples, honey, and spices. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the fruit releases moisture and begins to soften, about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool, or refrigerate until ready to use. Remove the star anise before filling the pies.

Assemble the Pies: Preheat your oven to 375°F. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream to make an egg wash. Roll out one piece of pastry at a time on a lightly floured surface. With a 3½-inch cutter, make as many circles as you can, rerolling if necessary. Fill the centers of half of the circles with the apple mixture and lightly brush the edges with egg wash. Lay the remaining circles on top of each filled circle and press gently with a fork to seal the edges. Transfer to a sheet pan. Brush the top crusts with egg wash and sprinkle some coarse sugar on top. Use a fork to pierce or cut an X in the top of the pies to release the steam as they bake.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until they are a golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature. These hand-pies store well for several days if kept in an airtight container.

Autumn Upside-Down Cake

Autumn Upside-Down Cake

Makes one 10-inch cake

This cake is best served warm with a side of maple whipped cream. You can vary the fruit and spices to accommodate any season, but this particular recipe celebrates the best of fall. Bartlett pears are easy to source and are a delicious choice, but Comice or the red Anjou work just as well.

Choosing persimmons can be baffling, as their ripeness and texture can be a cipher. Like pears, all persimmons will ripen once picked, so leaving them on the counter at home will help to develop their pumpkin-like flavor. Fuyus are best for this recipe and can be distinguished in the market by their flat bottoms and firm flesh. They should be barely soft and almost crisp when sliced, as opposed to other types of persimmons that need time to bring them to their mushy, sweet maturity. Slice off their tops and core them before roasting, tossing into salads, or using in this seasonal dessert. If you cannot source Fuyus, substitute with more pears.

For the Caramelized Fruit Layer:

45 g unsalted butter

135 g granulated sugar

2–3 firm Fuyu persimmons, cored and cut into ¼-inch slices

1 ripe pear, cored and cut into ½-inch slices

100 g fresh cranberries

For the Cake Batter:

145 g whole wheat pastry flour

1½ tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground nutmeg
½ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. sea salt
115 g unsalted butter, softened
135 g granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
200 g 100% hydration starter

Prepare the Fruit Layer: Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, melt the butter with the sugar. Set aside until cool. Place slices of fruit in the skillet, overlapping slightly, to create a wide ring. Place another, smaller concentric layer inside the first. The third layer will make one more circle. There should be about 2 inches left in the center of the skillet. Fill the center as well as any gaps you may have between the fruit slices with cranberries. Set aside.

Prepare the Cake: Whisk together the flour, baking powder, spices, and salt. In a separate bowl, beat the butter and sugar with a handheld mixer until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time and beat until smooth. Add the vanilla and stir until combined. With a fork beat in the starter until it is completely incorporated. Add small amounts of the dry mixture to the wet ingredients and stir until incorporated. Do not overmix.

Spread the thick cake mixture over the fruit and place in the preheated oven.

Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, rotating for even browning. The cake will be done when the center tests clean and the outside rim shows a warm browning. Allow to cool for about 15 to 20 minutes, then prepare to turn it out. Place your serving plate on top of the cast-iron skillet and turn it over with one quick flip. The cake should release just fine, but if any of the fruit sticks, gently remove it and place it back on top of the cake. This is best served right out of the oven.

***Pyrus communis* (Common pear)**

Pears are one of the few fruits that should not be picked when ripe but instead plucked from the tree at mature size, allowing the sugars to develop at room temperature. Color is a difficult gauge to use for ripeness, as this will vary by variety. To make sure they are ready to use, gently press the flesh of the “neck” nearest the stem. If it gives, then it will have enough sweetness and flavor to use in your baking.

Buckwheat Crepes

Makes six 6-inch crepes

I have always been inspired by the cookbooks of David Lebovitz. Their ingredients are approachable, the recipes are clearly and humorously written, and they give satisfying results without too many overwhelming steps. After treating myself to his book *My Paris Kitchen*, I decided it was time to develop a sourdough crepe inspired by his buckwheat version.

These are supereasy to whip up and can be used as a canvas for either savory or sweet adornment. I love to dress them with ham, grated cheese, and fresh herbs or, if I have a sweet tooth, a little Chocolate Ganache (this page) and sliced fruit.

100 g 100% hydration starter
2 large eggs
90–100 g whole milk
45 g fine buckwheat flour
Pinch of sea salt
15 g unsalted butter

In a medium mixing bowl, preferably with a pouring spout, beat together the starter, eggs, and 90 g of milk. Add the buckwheat flour and salt and stir until smooth. Depending on the thirst of the buckwheat flour, you may need to add the remaining milk to achieve a fluid consistency. It should be thinner than pancake batter and pour easily.

Heat a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add a small chunk of the butter and allow to melt. Pour or ladle a puddle of batter into the center of the pan. Working quickly, rotate the pan in a circular motion until the batter spreads into a thin circle, about 6 inches in diameter. Alternatively, use the back of a

flat ladle to spread the batter. Cook over medium-low for 2 to 3 minutes until bubbles begin to appear and the edges set. Flip to the other side and cook for another 2 minutes or so, until it is evenly brown. Remove to a plate, cover with a towel, and continue in the same manner until all the batter has been used. Serve immediately, or these are quite tasty the next day as well.

Chocolate Ganache

Makes about 450 g

This recipe isn't your typical ganache but is my preferred one to smear on crepes, fill Walnut Pâte Brisée (see this page) tartlets, or dress cookies. I make a batch and simply keep it in an airtight container in the fridge, reheating to use as needed. It keeps for 2 weeks.

240 g heavy whipping cream
30 g muscovado (or raw) sugar
170 g bittersweet chocolate, chopped
10 g brandy or rum
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Pinch of sea salt

In a bain-marie, heat the cream and sugar over medium heat until dissolved. Lower the heat and add the chocolate, stirring until melted. Turn off the heat and stir in the liquor, vanilla, and salt. Use immediately or keep sealed in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Persimmon Spice Cake

Makes one 10-inch Bundt cake

Persimmons are, botanically speaking, a berry of the trees belonging to the *Diospyros* genus, with its different species of varying edible qualities. These are most notably divided into astringent and nonastringent categories, and it is important to note that this recipe uses the astringent, soft-when-ripe types. *D. virginiana*, the North American native, and the Asian *D. kaki* (otherwise known as Hachiya) and *D. lotus* all contain high levels of tannins that mellow with ripeness. Use them when they are completely soft and bruise easily when squeezed.

For the Candied Cranberries:

225 g water
300 g granulated sugar
115 g fresh or frozen whole cranberries

For the Persimmon Puree:

460 g ripe persimmons (about 2 Hachiya)

For the Cake:

80 g dried cranberries
80 g dried apricots, chopped
40 g candied ginger, chopped
60 g spiced rum
225 g whole wheat pastry flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground nutmeg

½ tsp. ground allspice
½ tsp. sea salt
410 g persimmon puree (see left)
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
80 g maple syrup
300 g granulated sugar
115 g unsalted butter, melted
1 tsp. vanilla extract
200 g 100% hydration starter
100 g walnuts, toasted

Hard sauce (this page)

Candy the Cranberries: Heat the water and 225 g of sugar in a small saucepan over a medium flame, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat and stir in the cranberries. Allow to cool completely, then refrigerate for at least 4 and up to 24 hours. Drain the cranberries and lay out on a paper towel. Roll in the remaining 75 g sugar and allow to dry. Candied cranberries will keep well for up to 1 week in the refrigerator.

Puree the Persimmons: Remove the leaflike sepals from the persimmons, core, and remove the seeds (if using native persimmons). Place 410 g of the fruit in a food processor and blend until smooth.

Make the Cake: Preheat your oven to 350°F and generously butter and flour a 10-inch Bundt pan. In a small saucepan, combine the dried fruit, ginger, and rum and bring to a simmer. Turn off the burner and allow the fruit mixture to cool.

Whisk together the flour, baking soda, spices, and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate large bowl mix together the persimmon puree, eggs, maple syrup, sugar, butter, and vanilla. Add the starter and stir with a fork until combined. Stir in the fruit and rum mixture. Add the dry ingredients to the wet in thirds, stirring after each addition until combined, being careful not to overmix. Fold in the nuts and pour into the Bundt pan.

Bake for 55 to 60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center tests clean. Allow it to cool for at least 30 minutes and then turn out onto a plate. You may need to tap it gently to encourage it to release.

Finish with hard sauce if desired and add the candied cranberries for further decoration. Serve at room temperature. This cake will keep well for up to 1 week if covered.

Coconut Tahini Bars

Coconut Tahini Bars

Makes one 8½ × 11-inch baking dish

Autumn has always been my favorite time to plant roses and perennials. The scorching heat subsides to cooler nights and sometimes a bit of rain, allowing newly planted specimens to establish strong root systems. It is also a great time to transplant after a season of reflection and observing the growth habits of any new garden experiments. This time of year requires some energy and a little tummy fuel to keep up the endurance.

I developed these bars as a way to say thank-you to the hardworking interns at the BBG. They spend eight months assisting with many of the tasks mentioned above, which the staff would not be able to accomplish otherwise. They are paid little while also attending night classes, and this recipe was intended to give them some energy-dense food to fuel their journey! Chock-full of nuts, seeds, and dried fruit, these bars are also vegan.

115 g 100% hydration starter
220 g tahini
160 g mild honey
15 g almond milk (or whole milk)
30 g ground flaxseeds
½ tsp. sea salt
¾ tsp. baking powder
125 g unsweetened desiccated coconut
10 g sesame seeds
30 g chia seeds
130 g toasted cashews

105 g dried cranberries
35 g candied ginger, finely chopped

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a baking dish and set aside. In a medium bowl, combine the wet ingredients and beat with a fork until the mixture resembles streaky egg-drop soup. In a separate small bowl, combine the ground flax, salt, and baking powder. Add to the wet ingredients and lightly mix. Add 100 g of coconut and the rest of the ingredients and stir until a thick, chunky paste forms. Using a spatula, spread into the baking dish, making sure to fill the corners. Top with 25 g of the remaining coconut.

Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until the coconut is nice and toasty. Allow to cool completely before slicing. I have been known to drizzle a little chocolate ganache on top when feeling decadent. These store well for up to 5 days if kept covered and in the refrigerator.

Gingerbread Cake

Makes one 8½ × 11-inch dish

When taken with afternoon tea on a chilly autumn day, this cake is a fortifying treat simply sprinkled with a dusting of powdered sugar. Purchase firm pieces of culinary ginger with taut skins that are not wrinkly in appearance. First remove the skin, rubbing it free with a paring knife. Run the root against the fine side of a box grater over a plate, discarding any rough fibers, and use the remaining juice and pulp. Used in this cake along with candied ginger and other strong spices, ginger stands up well to whole grains such as spelt or wheat.

120 g whole spelt flour
½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground nutmeg
½ tsp. ground long pepper (see notes on this page) or black pepper
170 g unsalted butter
65 g brown sugar
65 g unsulfured molasses
2 large eggs
50 g whole milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger, grated
225 g 100% hydration starter
55 g candied ginger or citrus, chopped
Powdered sugar for dusting

Preheat your oven to 375°F. Line your baking dish with a piece of lightly greased parchment paper. It should drape over both edges lengthwise by about 2 inches. Set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and soda, salt, and ground spices and set aside. In a large bowl, beat together the butter and sugar with a hand mixer until fluffy and pale, about 5 minutes. Add the molasses, eggs, milk, vanilla, and fresh ginger and beat until combined. Stir in the starter with a fork. Stir in the flour mixture in small batches, making sure the starter is fully mixed into the batter each time but being careful not to overwork it. Stir in the candied ginger and spread the batter into the baking dish. Level the surface and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center tests clean. Serve warm or at room temperature dusted with powdered sugar. This is also excellent with vanilla ice cream. (But what dessert isn't?)

***Asarum canadense* (Wild ginger)**

Best known as an attractive groundcover in northeastern North American woodland settings, *Asarum canadense* was used by European settlers as a substitute for tropical *Zingiber officinale.* If using here, clean and peel the small rhizomes before grating. Otherwise, replace with the more widely available *Zingiber officianale.*

Zingiber officinale is a slender perennial culinary and medicinal herb belonging to the Zingiberaceae family that includes warming turmeric, cardamom, and galangal spices as well. The plant originates from tropical Asia but is now grown worldwide as a commercial crop. Its aromatic tuber-like rhizome is treated in myriad ways: grated into Indian curries or Jamaican jerk pastes, fried to garnish Chinese cookery, pickled for sushi, juiced with vegetables, or fermented to produce ale, and it makes a calming tea for a distressed belly. It is a wonder spice that strengthens the spirit and the body and is especially delicious when used fresh.

Baked Carrot and Pineapple Doughnuts with Tamarind Icing

Baked Carrot and Pineapple Doughnuts with Tamarind Icing

Makes fifteen 2-inch doughnuts

Tamarind paste is made from the leguminous fruits of *Tamarindus indica*, a feathery ornamental tree that is native to parts of eastern Africa but is now grown in tropical regions worldwide. With its pastelike consistency and sour taste, it is a common ingredient in many Thai, Indian, and Latin dishes. The natural sugars and acidity can be used in many ways including marinades, salsas, chutneys (see this page, this page), jams, and sorbets. It can be a flavorful substitute for vinegar, adding a touch of sweetness, or can even be used in lemonade. A little goes a long way in this icing that marries the other tropical flavors of pineapple and coconut with the carrots.

Tamarind can be found in several different forms, usually at ethnic markets. The potency and texture will vary, and the amount called for in this recipe will change according to your source, so taste as you go. If you can only find the dried pods, it's easy to make your own paste that will keep well when refrigerated. Simply place the pods in a saucepan with a little water and heat until soft. Work it through a strainer, keeping as much of the pulp as possible and discarding the seeds and tough shell bits.

For the Doughnuts:

25 g coconut oil, melted

40 g maple syrup

20 g fresh pineapple juice

½ tsp. vanilla extract

1 large egg

50 g panela sugar, grated
100 g 100% hydration starter
50 g carrots (about 1 medium carrot), grated
40 g fresh pineapple, diced
120 g whole spelt flour
½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
⅛ tsp. ground cloves
Pinch of sea salt

For the Tamarind Icing:
1½–2 tsp. tamarind paste
1-inch piece ginger, grated
20 g heavy cream
45 g cream cheese, softened
20 g powdered sugar

For the Garnish:
1½ Tbsp. toasted coconut flakes

Make the Doughnuts: Preheat your oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a mini doughnut pan with butter or oil and set aside. In a medium bowl, stir together the oil, maple syrup, pineapple juice, and vanilla. Beat in the egg and panela. Add the starter and beat with a fork. Stir in the grated carrots and pineapple and set aside. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, spices, and salt. Fold into the wet ingredients in three batches, but do not overmix. Fill the wells of the doughnut pan and bake, rotating the pan halfway through, for 17 or 18 minutes, until the tops are a golden brown. Remove the doughnuts from the oven and set on a wire rack to cool.

Prepare the Icing: While the doughnuts are baking, put the tamarind paste, grated ginger, and heavy cream in a small saucepan over low heat. Mash with a fork until the paste softens and infuses the cream. Remove and strain through a fine mesh sieve into a medium bowl. Beat in the softened cream cheese and sift the powdered sugar over the top. Stir until combined and no lumps remain.

Ice the doughnuts and place on a serving tray. Decorate with toasted coconut and serve the same day.

Quince and Walnut Tea Cookies

Quince and Walnut Tea Cookies

Makes approximately 18 cookies

The familiar plants sometimes referred to as quince are a species of the genus *Chaenomeles.* Both commonly cultivated species, *C. japonica* and *C. speciosa*, can be used interchangeably with *Cydonia oblonga* in this recipe although their fruit tends to be a bit more acidic in flavor. *Cydonia oblonga* is the sole member of its genus in the rose family, whose highly nutritious fruit is packed with potassium and vitamin C. Unfortunately, its hard muscular flesh is not agreeable eaten raw, but when cooked it softens and pairs equally well with sweet or savory dishes.

This recipe includes instructions on how to make quince jam, which is delicious served with nuts and aromatic tea. You will have plenty left over that can be swirled into yogurt or used to dress roasted lamb or top your favorite toast.

For the Jam:

425 g fresh quinces (about 3 medium-large fruits)

2 cinnamon sticks

5 cardamom pods, crushed

3–4 whole cloves

2 whole star anise

965 g water

215 g granulated sugar

Zest and juice of 1 small lemon

For the Cookie Dough:

170 g whole wheat pastry flour

35 g granulated sugar

½ tsp. sea salt
1 Tbsp. Earl Grey tea leaves
1 tsp. lemon zest
85 g cold unsalted butter
1 large egg, beaten
100 g 100% hydration starter
85 g walnuts, finely chopped

Make the Jam: Peel and core the quinces, discarding the seeds but reserving the rest. These parts contain large amounts of pectin necessary for helping to set and enhance the color of the jam. Place the peels and cores in a piece of cheesecloth along with the spices and tie with baker's twine. Chop the quince flesh into 1-inch pieces and place in a large saucepan with the water and the spice sachet. Cook on medium-low heat for 30 minutes, stirring as necessary to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pan.

Remove from the heat and strain the syrupy liquid from the fruit. You will need approximately 235 grams of liquid in reserve and can discard the rest or use it to make jelly. Place the fruit in a food processor or blender and process until smooth. Return the puree to the saucepan along with 1 cup of reserved liquid and add the sugar and lemon zest. Cook over the lowest heat setting for another 45 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent the bottom from burning. Add the lemon juice and cook, stirring for another 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Alternatively, you may process to preserve in jars.

Assemble the Cookies: Preheat your oven to 375°F. In a large bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flour, sugar, salt, tea, and lemon zest. Cut in the butter or pulse until coarse crumbs are formed. Stir or pulse in the egg and then add the starter. Stir or pulse until the dough just starts to come together. Turn out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead a few times until the dough comes together. Roll about 1½ tablespoons of dough in the chopped walnuts and place onto a lined cookie sheet. Press firmly with your thumb to make a wide well in the dough. Spoon about ½ tablespoon of quince jam into each well.

Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or until the cookies are golden brown on the bottom. These store well for several days if kept in an airtight container.

5 | Winter Dormancy

BREADS

DRUNKEN FIG BREAD

SARAGURO CHEESE BREAD

WALNUT AND BLEU CHEESE FOUGASSE

HONEYED SPELT AND OAT LEVAIN

LUMBERJANE LOAF

SMOKY CHILI BREAD

PANE DI FARRO

SAVORIES

SPROUTED EMMER CRISPS

INDIAN CHUTNEY BIALYS

ROOT VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

SUN-DRIED TOMATO SHORTBREADS

SWEETS

CHOCOLATE AND PORT WINE BEETROOT CAKE

NUTBUTTER COOKIES

ROASTED BANANA MARBLE CAKE

LEMON CURD TART

LEMON MADELEINES

CHOCOLATE, CURRANT, AND CINNAMON BABKA

APRICOT AND PISTACHIO SWIRLS

CHOCOLATE CHIPOTLE KUMQUAT CAKE

BLOOD ORANGE TARTLETS WITH JAPANESE SWEET POTATO CREAM

DARK CHOCOLATE BUCKWHEAT COOKIES

WHEN I ARRIVED TO WORK ONE BLUSTERY MORNING, THE FIFTY-FIFTH INCH OF THE FOURTEENTH OFFICIAL SNOWSTORM OF THE SEASON WAS FALLING. AS MUCH AS GARDENERS LOVE THE LUXURY OF WORKING OUTDOORS IN ALL TYPES OF WEATHER, this particular winter's snowfall was wearing on everyone's nerves as much as their backs. At least the grounds of the Botanic Garden provided a vista of pristine snow unlike the brackish brown slush of the city streets. Other than the shuffle of our boots and the occasional call of our loyal raptor population, there was little life pushing forth in late February.

This was a winter unlike any the New York region had seen in at least twenty years. We had become accustomed to the comfort of long-lasting autumns and early springs. After returning from an extended trip to lush and verdant Ecuador, I took daily walks looking for any sign of life: swelling *Magnolia* buds or the expansion of catkins on the alder trees. Anything that might give hope of green growth was much welcomed.

True spring didn't arrive for at least another month after the streets were flooded with melting snow. This is when I discovered the joy of bringing forth life myself, in the kitchen through sprouting. If I couldn't nurse it in the natural cycle of the outdoors, I could manipulate time, moisture, air, and temperature to sprout my own grain. There might be a blizzard blowing just outside my window, but I could witness the miracle of life on my countertop!

This small feat was an empowering act of resistance. I was taking cold, gray matters into my own hands. It was promising to witness how a little water and warmth could initiate a rebellion against dormancy.

Not only does sprouting yield a deep emotional satisfaction, it also nourishes the body. Sprouting grain intended for consumption is one way to increase digestibility and remove anti-nutrients that seeds naturally possess. Sprouting catalyzes enzyme activity that helps to break down otherwise indigestible portions of grain including gluten proteins and natural compounds like phytates that interfere with the absorption of nutrients. Humans do not have the extra stomachs to help process grain like ruminants do. But we can use brainpower to harness the nutritional potential of our food sources instead.

An equally encouraging benefit of sprouting is the enhanced flavor quality. Wheat becomes grassier, buckwheat nuttier, rye earthier. Breads baked with sprouted grains have a toothsome quality they've never possessed before, and pastries acquire a subtle freshness unlocked by the development of natural sugars. Because what is the point of eating healthy if it doesn't taste absolutely delicious?

Drunken Fig Bread

Drunken Fig Bread

Makes 2 loaves

I am often asked how I come up with my formulas and flavor combinations. It's not always a simple answer and usually has to do with excess produce from the garden or very specific cravings. With the day's ingredients on hand, I'll sit down with a calculator and start dreaming up bread dough formulas based on baker's math.

This particular recipe began with a less-than-drinkable bottle of wine. Instead of discarding it, I doused some figs and left them to soak in the bold, oaky flavors. Because I love the combination of rye and fruit, I pulled out the grinds of rye I had on hand and started mixing by feel rather than calculations. Eventually I came around to this formula that honors the hearty quality of whole grains, which marries so well with the ambrosia of figs. My favorite is to serve it with a strong soft cheese and a bottle of *quality* red wine.

For the Soaker:
240 g dried mission figs
105 g red wine

For the Leaven:
15 g 100% hydration starter
40 g water
25 g medium-grind rye flour
30 g rye chops

For the Dough:
110 g leaven
370 g water

Soaker (see above)
370 g bread flour
85 g whole wheat flour
45 g rye chops
25 g buckwheat flour
17 g salt

Make the Soaker: Remove and discard the stems of the figs and coarsely chop the fruit. Place in a medium bowl and douse with wine. Cover with plastic and allow to soak until ready to build the dough.

Build the Leaven: Ten to twelve hours before you are to make the dough, build your stiff leaven. Mix the starter and water together until the starter is well distributed. Add the rye flours, stir, cover, and leave at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is puffy and active, add the water and soaker, breaking apart the leaven with your fingers. Add the flours and mix until hydrated and no lumps remain. Handle only as long as you need to, being careful not to overdevelop the rye. The dough will feel sticky. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle in the salt and mix until completely incorporated into the dough.

Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 2 to 3 hours, turning and folding at 45-minute intervals.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and increased by a third of its size, divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 30 minutes. Final shape into your preferred form and place seam-side up into a well-floured banneton or couche. Alternatively, you may flour the face well and proof seam-side down. (If you choose to do this, the surface will crack beautifully in the oven to release steam without the need for scoring. This creates a beautiful natural pattern similar to desert clay.) Cover with a towel and plastic and proof for another 1 to 2 hours. You may hold the dough over in the refrigerator for up to 6 hours, but it does not favor long fermentation.

This bread appreciates being baked long and slow. Follow the instructions on this page, lowering the oven temperature to 430°F after initial oven spring is achieved. After removing from the oven, allow to cool *completely* before slicing. Rye breads need this time for their crumb to set and, indeed, may be better the next day!

Saraguro Cheese Bread

Saraguro Cheese Bread

Makes four 6-inch flatbreads

Traveling for an extended period in a foreign country has its advantages, not the least of which is having time to make side trips to remote villages. Saraguro, Ecuador, was one such village, where I could have spent ages wandering through the artisan shops and along the dusty mountainside. Luckily, I was passing through on a Sunday, when the *mercado* is swollen to its fullest. The indigenous women of the region wear their most splendid dress on this day, with colorful beaded jewelry, long skirts, black-and-white wide-brimmed hats, and stoic smiles for inquisitive *gringas.* The men have their own uniform of black capri-style pants, a white shirt with a black vest and poncho, and a long, sleek ponytail dangling from beneath a bowler hat.

The stalls of the mercado were grouped by similar vendors, partitioned off from other kinds. The meats were separate from the fish, which were separate from the vegetables, grains, various exotic fruits, and so on. Up the hill and off to the side was a little enclave of women and their children making flatbreads over hot coals. I watched as they stuffed what seemed like a coarse whole-grain, unleavened dough with queso fresco, the cheese that is ubiquitous in Ecuador. Curious, I tried a warm sample. Its surprisingly sweet and nutty barley flavor was strong, and it was obviously made from freshly ground flour. I had never tasted barley this fresh and alive; it made all the difference in the flavor of this bread.

Returning home, the memory of that experience lingered, and it has been difficult to replicate it. Here is my best attempt using the freshest milled barley possible. An even more pleasing result is to sprout the barley first before grinding into flour, a process that

extracts the natural sweetness of the grain. If you can't source queso fresco, a strong feta or goat cheese can be substituted, but even a melty cheese will be delicious.

For the Dough:

250 g barley flour

½ tsp. baking powder

5 g salt

40 g cold unsalted butter

105 g buttermilk

20 g strong honey (buckwheat, locust, or chestnut work well)

200 g 100% hydration starter

For the Stuffing:

80 g queso fresco, crumbled

In a large bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flour, baking powder, and salt. Cut or pulse in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse, pea-sized crumbs. Add the buttermilk, honey, and starter and pulse or stir until the dough comes together. Remove from the bowl and gently knead on the counter a few times to gain an even consistency.

Divide the dough into four equal balls and create a well in each. Stuff with 1 to 1½ tablespoons of cheese and seal. Place onto a lightly floured surface and roll to coat. With the palm of your hand, begin pressing a ball into a flat round. Once the dough has become thin enough to see the cheese, pick it up and pinch continuously with your hands, rotating the circle parallel to your torso. As you work, the weight of the dough will help stretch it until it reaches about a 6-inch diameter. Set aside and cover with plastic. Continue shaping the others while the first ones are cooking.

Heat a heavy skillet over medium heat for 4 to 5 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium-low and cook one round at a time until golden brown, about 5 to 6 minutes on each side. Serve immediately with more strong honey or top with beans, a fried egg, and salsa for a hearty brunch.

Walnut and Bleu Cheese Fougasse

Walnut and Bleu Cheese Fougasse

Makes 2 large or 4 small ladder breads

This decorative bread is ideal served at a communal table where it can be passed around, broken apart, and dunked into a hearty soup. Its high crust-to-crumb ratio means it is best served the same day it is baked. Make it with a quality semi-firm bleu cheese such as Roquefort, a milder Fourme d'Ambert, a blue Stilton, or any other semi-firm cheese in this style, and you will be pleased with the savory outcome. Fougasse dough may be shaped and snipped into many sculptural forms, the most common resembling an ear of wheat. Be creative and experiment, as it is a fairly forgiving technique.

For the Leaven:

25 g 100% hydration starter

25 g water

25 g bread flour

For the Dough:

75 g leaven

305 g water

360 g bread flour

40 g whole spelt flour

9 g salt

85 g bleu cheese, crumbled

85 g walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form

a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, add the water and stir. Add the flours and mix with your hands until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Fold in the cheese and walnuts and cover again with plastic. Bulk proof for 3 hours, turning and folding at 30- to 45-minute intervals.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, turn out onto a well-floured surface.

Divide in half or quarters and preshape to form loose batards. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape and place onto a well-floured couche. Cover with a towel and plastic. Allow to proof for another 2 hours at room temperature or for 4 to 6 hours in the fridge.

Prior to baking, flatten the proofed batard using your hands or a rolling pin and place on a parchment-lined sheet pan. Slit with a knife or scissors in the pattern of your choice, spreading the cuts open.

Bake according to the instructions on this page for 20 to 22 minutes, being careful not to let the crust get too dark. A chewy, soft texture with a crispy crust is preferred here, especially with the added cheese and nuts.

Honeyed Spelt and Oat Levain

Honeyed Spelt and Oat Levain

Makes 2 loaves

This nutritious loaf is a wonderful everyday bread, perfect for toast or sandwiches. The natural flavors of the whole grains are heightened by the honey, whose presence is quietly noticeable. The medium hydration of this loaf coupled with a decent amount of whole grains means it will not have as open a crumb as some of the other breads in this book. But honestly, sometimes I just prefer a slice of bread I can slather with honey or jam without losing half of it onto my plate.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

40 g water

40 g whole spelt flour

For the Soaker:

140 g rolled oats

275 g boiling water

For the Dough:

110 g leaven

245 g water

Soaker (see left)

45 g honey

105 g whole spelt flour

445 g bread flour

11 g salt

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Make the Soaker: At the same time you mix your leaven, make your soaker in a separate bowl. Measure your oats and add the boiling water. Cover and let sit at room temperature until ready to mix your dough.

Build the Dough: When your leaven is puffy and active, add the water, soaker, and honey, stirring to combine. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix thoroughly with your hands, making sure it is completely incorporated. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, turn out onto a well-floured surface. Divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape and place into well-floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Lumberjane Loaf

Lumberjane Loaf

Makes 2 loaves

Winter is the ideal time to prune trees and shrubs. For a rosarian, the dormant season is always a busy time in the garden, much to the surprise of most people. Happy to have the opportunity to stay active, I developed a hearty loaf to keep my pruners and saws moving despite the cold. This formula embodies everything I consider to be filling winter fare including whole grains, seeds, nuts, and dried fruit.

For the Leaven:

10 g 100% hydration starter
40 g water
40 g bread flour
15 g buckwheat flour

For the Dough:

105 g leaven
405 g water
420 g bread flour
75 g whole wheat flour
20 g medium rye flour
10 g salt

Fold-ins:

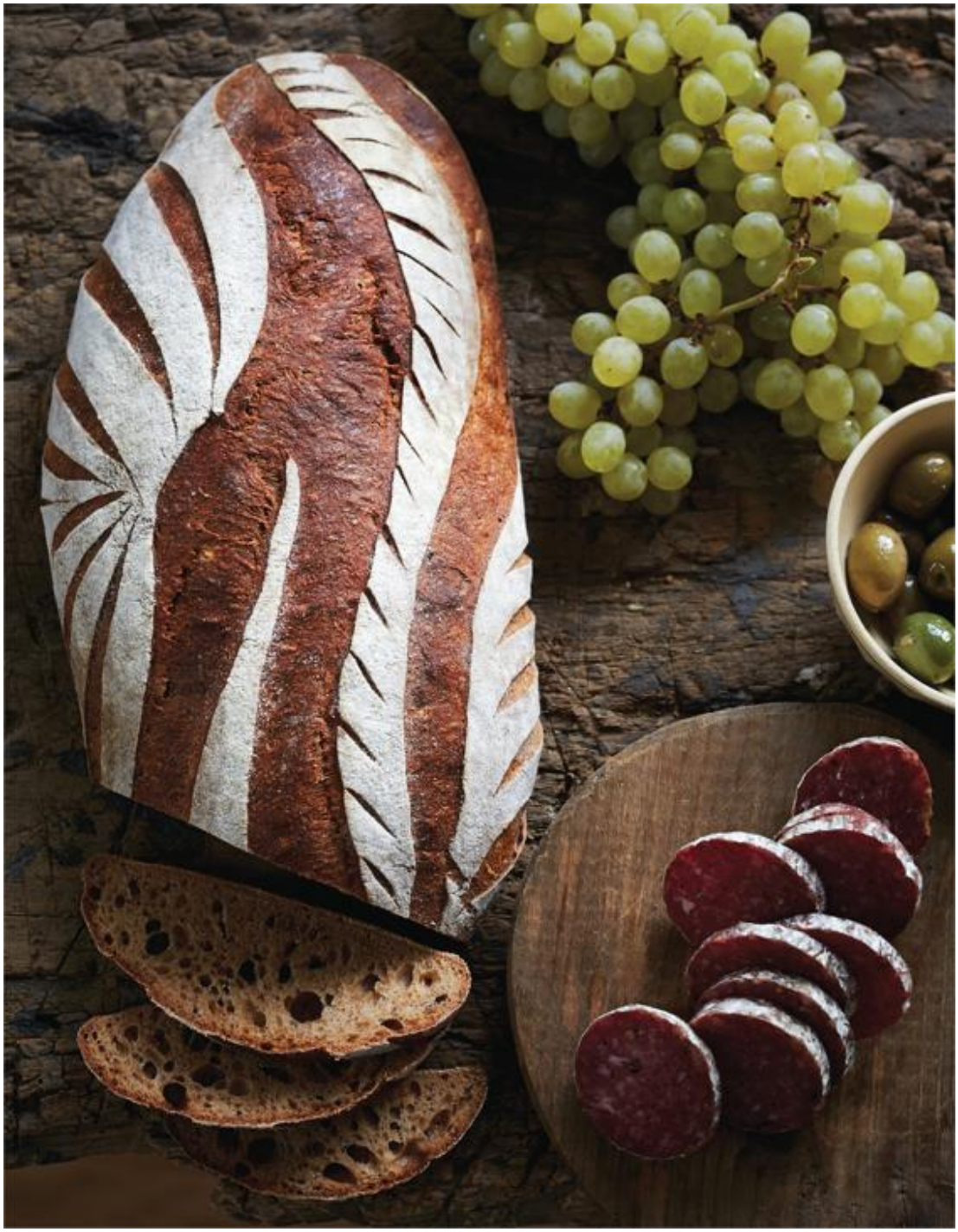
180 g dried apricots, coarsely chopped
180 g pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped
30 g dry whole millet
9 g poppy seeds

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flours and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, add the water and stir, breaking up the leaven. Add the flours and mix with your hands until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle in the salt and mix until completely incorporated into the dough. Fold in the apricots, pecans, and seeds and cover again with plastic. Bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding at 30- to 45-minute intervals.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, turn out onto a well-floured surface. Divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape and place into well-floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.



Smoky Chili Bread

Smoky Chili Bread

Makes 2 loaves

This is a bread for all seasons, as it uses dried ground chilies as its main flavoring agent. I love making it in the winter, when several layers of socks, long johns, and a heavy down coat just aren't warming my bones. You may choose whatever chilies you can source, but I prefer to use smoked mora, morita, or chipotle peppers and to grind them just before adding to the dough. This is an excellent sandwich bread but pairs surprisingly well with tart jams such as rhubarb and some sexy burrata cheese.

For the Leaven:
30 g 100% hydration starter
60 g water
85 g bread flour

For the Dough:
175 g leaven
520 g water
45 g mild honey
525 g bread flour
140 g whole wheat flour
30 g medium rye flour
1 Tbsp. ground smoked chilies
17 g salt

Build the Leaven: Eight hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a

slurry. Add the flour and mix with your hand. It should feel somewhat stiff. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is puffy and active, add the water and honey, stirring to combine. Add the flours and ground chilies and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape according to preference and place seam-side up in floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 16 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Pane di Farro

Pane di Farro

Makes 2 loaves

Farro is a deliciously nutty species of wheat (*Triticum*) that has been eaten in Italian cuisines for centuries. It has an ancient history, originating somewhere in the Fertile Crescent before spreading to other locations, cultures, and cuisines. Subsequently, nomenclature can be quite confusing when trying to purchase it as whole berries or flour. *Farro* is a generic Italian designation for the three different varieties that are now commonly found in the U.S. market.

Triticum monococcum may be referred to as *farro piccolo*, simply "small farro," or *einkorn* by the Germans; *farro medio*, or medium farro, is referred to in Hebrew as *emmer* but in botanical Latin as *Triticum dicoccum*; and *farro grande*—the largest grain of the three—is spelt or, more precisely, *Triticum spelta.* Confused yet?

The grain I used to develop this large, moist loaf is *Triticum dicoccum*, sourced from an old-school Italian provisions store deep in the heart of Brooklyn. I have also used Farro Rustico flour from Anson Mills, made with roasted spelt, with equally satisfying results, yielding a strongly nutty flavor to the crust and crumb.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

60 g water

60 g bread flour

For the Dough:

600 g water

335 g high-extraction wheat flour

190 g coarse farro flour
150 g bread flour
75 g dark rye flour
150 g leaven
15 g salt

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a medium bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and stir with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: Place the water in a large bowl and add the flours, mixing with your hand until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 1 hour. Mix in the leaven until no visible streaks remain. Cover again with plastic and let sit for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 2 to 3 more hours, turning and folding every 30 minutes. Cover with plastic and refrigerate for 6 to 8 hours.

Shape the Dough: Remove the dough from the refrigerator and turn out onto a well-floured surface. Divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes before final shaping. Place the shaped loaves seam-side up in well-floured linen-lined bannetons. Cover with plastic for a final rise for 1 hour at room temperature. Alternatively, retard in the refrigerator for another 6 to 8 hours before baking.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Sprouted Emmer Crisps

Sprouted Emmer Crisps

Makes approximately 2 dozen crisps

These crisps have a tender but crunchy quality with the naturally sweet nutty flavor of emmer (*Triticum dicoccum*) enhanced by the sprouting process. Sprouting grain takes a few days so you need to plan ahead, but the enhanced flavor and nutrition are well worth the effort. These crisps are fantastic made with smoky Chili Citrus Butter (this page), but plain butter will do as well.

There are several ways to sprout grains, but I prefer a simple method that allows for adequate air exchange. It is possible to soak the grains and then place them in a covered jar, but they may go sour before sprouting if not given enough air circulation. If you choose this method, make sure you shake the grain 2 to 3 times per day to allow them to breathe and cover the jar only loosely, or with cheesecloth.

With either method, give yourself a 3-day lead. If you are using a hard “berry” such as emmer, rye, or kamut, first cover with warm water for at least 2 hours or overnight. Drain and spread into a single layer on a baking sheet. Wet a dishtowel thoroughly, ringing out any excess water, and place over the grains. Check one or two times per day, stirring the grains and rewetting the towel if it becomes dry. After the first day, you will notice the radicle beginning to swell at the tip of the grain. After 2 to 3 days it will be fully extended as a primary root, signaling that the grain is ready to use. If you are not prepared to use the grain right away, store covered in the refrigerator for a few days or freeze for up to 2 weeks. I like to sprout large batches at once, reserving some in the freezer for breads, warm salads, and these crisps.

100 g sprouted emmer berries
300 g water
115 g Chili Citrus Butter (this page)
60 g 100% hydration starter
115 g whole wheat flour
¾ tsp. salt

In a medium saucepan, cook the emmer berries in the water over medium-low heat until tender and dry, about 35 to 40 minutes. Place in the food processor and chop until finely ground. Add the butter and starter and pulse a few times to distribute the starter. Add the flour and salt and process until the dough starts to form a ball around the blade. Remove the dough from the bowl and gently knead on a lightly floured surface until it comes together.

To make rectangular crisps, line a mini bread pan with lightly greased parchment paper so that it overhangs on two sides. Using a spatula, spread the dough into the pan, cover, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, until hardened or up to 24 hours. To make round crisps, roll the dough into a 2-inch-thick log using a lightly greased piece of parchment or even plastic wrap.

Preheat your oven to 475°F. Slice the formed dough into ⅛-inch pieces using a sharp knife and place in a single layer on a lined baking sheet. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through to gain an even bake. The crisps will be ready when the edges are golden brown.

Indian Chutney Bialys

Indian Chutney Bialys

Makes nine approximately 4½-inch bialys

Bialys have become so synonymous with New York City that most people are not even aware of their Polish beginnings. In the early 1900s, Eastern European Jewish immigrants brought Bialystok kuchen recipes with them. A traditional bialy can now be found only at a select few locations, such as Kossar's Bakery; unfortunately many others are replicas manufactured with low-quality ingredients and preservatives. This recipe is a perfect example of a traditional specialty being adapted with a nod to the city's multiculturalism.

For the Chutney (makes about 900 g):

80 g extra-virgin olive oil

12 g red chilies (about 4 large), stems removed (choose your heat—I used Costeño)

20 g tamarind paste

1 tsp. ground cumin

1 tsp. grated fresh ginger

4 dried curry leaves

1 large sprig of fresh thyme

1 Tbsp. mustard seeds

600 g onion, chopped

2 large garlic cloves

30 g grated panela or jaggery

180 g fresh tomatoes, chopped

1 Tbsp. sesame seeds

For the Dough:

180 g 100% hydration starter, refreshed (fed)

250 g water
305 g bread flour
55 g whole wheat flour
7 g salt

For the Topping:
1 Tbsp. poppy seeds

Make the Chutney: In a large skillet, heat 60 g of the oil and the chilies, tamarind, spices, herbs, and mustard seeds until the seeds begin to crackle. Add 475 g of the onion and the garlic, grated panela, and tomatoes and sauté until slightly caramelized. Transfer into a food processor and process until smooth. In the same pan add the remaining 125 g onions and 20 g oil and sauté until just soft, but do not caramelize. Transfer the sautéed onions and oil to a small bowl and stir in about half of the puree and the sesame seeds. This will be the bialy topping.

Build the Dough: Mix the starter and water together in a large bowl. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until thoroughly incorporated. Perform about 5 to 7 minutes of slap-and-fold (this page) to build strength in the dough. Bulk proof for 2 to 3 more hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes. Remove the dough from the bowl, then clean the bowl and oil it. Return the dough to the bowl, cover with a towel and then plastic, and refrigerate overnight.

Assemble the Bialys: The next morning, preheat your oven to 475°F and gently remove the dough from the bowl, being as careful as possible not to degas it. Divide the dough into nine 85 g pieces on a lightly floured work surface. Preshape into loosely formed balls, cover, and allow to rest for 10 to 30 minutes.

Press each ball and rotate from the center outward until you have a thin middle and a thick(er) outer rim, similar to shaping pizza dough. If the dough is resisting, cover it and allow to rest and relax a few minutes before

resuming. You want your final shape to be about 4½ inches in diameter. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet dusted with semolina or cornmeal.

With kitchen scissors, make a shallow snip in the middle of each dough circle, creating a hole about ¼ inch wide. Add about 1 Tbsp. of chutney to the middle and then sprinkle with poppy seeds. (The hole will seal as it bakes, but it allows some of the chutney to caramelize on the bottom.)

Bake with steam for 10 minutes, then rotate and bake for another 8 to 10 minutes, depending on your desired crust color. I like bialys on the slightly soft side, so I don’t bake them as dark as I do a hearth loaf.

Root Vegetable Casserole

Root Vegetable Casserole

Makes four individual 6-inch casseroles or one large 10-inch casserole

Casseroles can evoke memories of overcooked vegetables in an indefinable gloppy sauce, usually topped with cornflakes or canned fried onions. What a shame, as the casserole has the potential to elevate surprising flavors and textures in a much more sophisticated and comforting dish. Using curry spices as flavoring and a cheesy cornmeal biscuit crust, this is a vibrant vegetarian dish that is beautiful served as a one-pot meal. The vegetables retain their firmness and rich coloring while mingling with the sweet but spicy caramelized onions and greens. If you prefer a heartier version, add chickpeas or a little crumbled bacon to the filling before baking.

For the Filling:

1 tsp. mustard seeds

25 g extra-virgin olive oil

15 g Chili Citrus Butter (see this page)

180 g onion, sliced

1 tsp. ground cumin

½ tsp. ground turmeric

1 tsp. ground coriander

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

2 garlic cloves, chopped

1 tsp. salt

200 g beets (about 2 small beets), peeled and quartered

200 g carrots (about 3 medium carrots), peeled

60 g kale, beet, or Swiss chard leaves, deveined and shredded

135 g whole yogurt

135 g cheese, grated (Cheddar, Monterey Jack, or Colby works well)

For the Cornbread Biscuit Topping:
100 g cornmeal
½ tsp. baking soda
Pinch of sea salt
85 g Chili Citrus Butter (this page), cold
50 g cheese, grated
1 large egg, beaten
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
150 g 100% hydration starter
45–50 g buttermilk

For the Garnish:
2–3 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro or parsley for garnish

Prepare the Filling: Preheat your oven to 375°F. Heat a skillet over medium-low flame and add the mustard seeds. Toast, stirring, until they are fragrant and begin to pop (about 1 minute). Add the oil and butter and allow to melt. Stir in the onion, ground spices, garlic, and salt and cook over medium-low for about 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions have softened.

Using a mandolin, thinly slice the beets and carrots to $^{1}/_{16}$ inch thick. Place them in a medium bowl and add the onion mixture, greens, yogurt, and cheese. Toss to combine then distribute evenly among your baking dishes, if using more than one. Spread into an even layer.

Make the Biscuit Topping: Whisk together the cornmeal, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl. Using your fingers, cut in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse, pea-sized crumbs. Toss in the cheese then stir in the egg and chives. Stir in the starter. Add buttermilk until the batter becomes moist and spoonable but still thick.

Place dollops of the biscuit mixture on top of your beet mixture and bake in the oven for 40 to 45 minutes, until the cornbread topping is golden brown. Garnish with the cilantro and serve warm.

Sun-Dried Tomato Shortbreads

Sun-Dried Tomato Shortbreads

Makes 7 dozen 1½-inch shortbreads

Everyone who has tried these savory little biscuits has a serving suggestion. They are at home beside a bowl of steaming butternut squash soup or eaten plain as a snack. As my default recipe for a holiday party, I top them with a dollop of goat cheese and a juicy caper berry.

30 g sun-dried tomatoes
110 g Parmesan
25 g granulated sugar
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
120 g whole wheat pastry flour
40 g fine cornmeal
½ tsp. paprika
Pinch of salt
126 g cold unsalted butter
100 g 100% hydration starter

Place the sun-dried tomatoes, Parmesan, sugar, and rosemary in a food processor and grind to a fine texture, scraping down the sides as necessary. Add the flour, cornmeal, paprika, and salt and pulse to combine. Add the butter and pulse to form coarse crumbs. Add the starter and pulse to combine.

Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured surface and pat into a round disk. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 2 days. When ready to bake, remove the dough from the fridge and allow to soften on the counter for about 5 minutes. Preheat your oven to 350°F.

Unwrap the dough and place on a lightly floured surface. With a floured rolling pin, roll to about a ¼-inch thickness, using your dough scraper to assist. Using a small cookie cutter, cut out the shortbreads, reworking the dough until it is all used. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 13 to 15 minutes, until they are golden brown around the edges. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Chocolate and Port Wine Beetroot Cake

Chocolate and Port Wine Beetroot Cake

Makes one 9-inch double-layer cake

This dense chocolate cake uses three garnet-colored ingredients that complement one another well. Served with candied cranberries (this page), this rich holiday cake is an elegant but simple end to a meal. For a more decadent pairing, serve with vanilla ice cream and a side of wood-aged tawny port.

For the Beet Puree:

400 g fresh beets (about 3 large beets)
170 g ruby port

For the Cake:

215 g all-purpose flour
55 g barley flour
85 g cocoa powder
1½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
225 g unsalted butter, softened
240 g granulated sugar
3 large eggs
Beet puree (see above)
150 g 100% hydration starter

For the Icing:

225 g bittersweet chocolate, chopped into small chunks
175 g sour cream

For the Garnish:

Candied cranberries (see this page)

Make the Beet Puree: Preheat your oven to 425°F. Roast the beets whole until they are tender to a fork, about 45 to 60 minutes. Let cool until ready to handle.

Cut off the tops and tails of the beets and peel away the skin. Add 200 g of roasted beets to a blender or food processor along with the port wine and process until smooth, scraping down the sides as necessary. Set aside or refrigerate until ready to use.

Make the Cake: Preheat your oven to 375°F. Butter and flour two 9-inch cake pans. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt. In a separate large bowl, beat together the butter and sugar until pale and creamy, about 5 minutes. Beat in the eggs one at a time followed by the beet puree. Using a fork, beat in the starter. Fold in the flour mixture in thirds, stirring after each addition just to combine.

Divide the batter between the two cake tins and bake for 20 to 22 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center tests clean. Cool on a wire rack.

Assemble the Cake: Melt the chocolate in a bain-marie and allow to cool. Stir in the sour cream. The consistency should be thick and easy to spread. Stack and ice the cake, placing chopped candied cranberries in between the layers. Garnish with candied cranberries. This cake will keep for up to 1 week if refrigerated.

Nutbutter Cookies

Nutbutter Cookies

Makes 7 to 8 dozen 2-inch cookies

When formulating a sourdough cookie recipe, it is important to know that the added moisture from the starter easily produces a cake-like texture. And while a soft and tender crumb is fine for some applications (enter the ice cream sandwich), I simply prefer a cookie with more bite—a brittle biscotti for dunking or a chewy, barely sweet nugget for breakfast. These cookies are versions of the latter and ones that I make in large batches to satiate my desire for mid-morning nibbling. Made with a stiff rye leaven, these succulent morsels have no hint of acidity, though all the flour is fully fermented. Date sugar and maple syrup make this a nutritious cookie full of healthy fats that tastes more decadent than it really is!

For the Leaven:

20 g 100% hydration starter

50 g water

70 g medium-grind rye flour

For the Cookie Dough:

140 g leaven

2 large eggs

60 g maple syrup

½ tsp. baking soda

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

¼ tsp. ground nutmeg

480 g nut butter of choice (almond, peanut, cashew, etc.)

180 g date sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

30 g rolled oats

Build the Leaven: Eight hours before you make the cookies, mix together the starter and water in a medium bowl. Add the rye flour, mix with your hand until hydrated and stiff, and cover with plastic. Leave to ferment at room temperature. When it is puffy and smelling of honeyed fruit, you can mix it into the dough or refrigerate up to several days before using.

Make the Cookie Dough: Preheat your oven to 350°F. Add the eggs and maple syrup to the leaven and stir. Sprinkle the baking soda, cinnamon, and nutmeg over the top and stir to incorporate. Mash in the nut butter, sugar, and vanilla to create a stiff dough and then fold in the oats.

Form the dough into small balls and place onto a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Using a fork, press the balls gently to flatten into disks. Dip your fork in flour before each cookie to prevent it from sticking to the dough.

Bake for 7 to 8 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through, until the edges just begin to appear firm. Do not overbake. Allow to cool on a wire rack. These keep well in a covered container at room temperature for 4 to 5 days.

Roasted Banana Marble Cake

Roasted Banana Marble Cake

Makes one 10-inch Bundt cake

When I want to take the cold edge off of my kitchen in winter, I turn to this recipe. It has several oven steps, including first roasting the bananas. This helps caramelize natural sugars into a distinct flavor. Because whole wheat pastry flour is used, the color contrast of the marbling will not be as dramatic, but the flavor and health benefits should sway you beyond aesthetics.

For the Roasted Bananas:

500 g (about 4) ripe large bananas, sliced into 1-inch pieces
30 g brown sugar
30 g bourbon or rum

For the Cake:

375 g whole wheat pastry flour
1¼ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¾ tsp. salt
Roasted bananas (see left)
3 large eggs, beaten
130 g butter, melted
160 g whole milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
200 g 100% hydration starter
30 g cocoa powder

Preheat your oven to 375°F. Generously grease and flour your Bundt pan and set aside.

Roast the Bananas: Combine the bananas, brown sugar, and liquor in an oven dish and roast for 15 minutes, or until the bananas show caramelization, stirring about halfway through.

Make the Cake: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and soda, cinnamon, and salt. After the bananas have cooled, combine them with the eggs, melted butter, milk, and vanilla in a food processor. Pulse until smooth. Add the starter and pulse until you achieve a consistent texture.

Transfer the wet ingredients to a large bowl and fold in about a third of the flour mixture at a time, being careful not to overmix. Once combined, transfer about half of the mixture into another bowl and sift the cocoa over the remaining batter. Stir to just combine.

Alternate layers of each batter in the prepared Bundt pan. When finished, use a knife to draw figure-eight swirls into the batter. This will create the marbleized effect.

Bake for about 55 to 60 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through. When a toothpick inserted into the center tests clean, remove the cake from the oven and allow to rest for at least 20 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool. This cake is delicious on its own but should be dressed with powdered sugar, Chocolate Ganache (this page), or hard sauce (see this page).

Lemon Curd Tart

Lemon Curd Tart

Makes one 13½ × 4-inch tart

Citrus limon is our cherished common lemon, easily grown in Mediterranean climates such as Italy and California. Ripening during the winter months, the thick-skinned varieties keep well throughout the year, and indeed, many people are not aware they have a season.

I prefer to use the juice of *Citrus x meyeri*, or Meyer lemons, in this recipe for their sweet floral flavor (which may come from the cross of the common lemon with a Mandarin or common orange). Their skin is thin, making them more susceptible to spoilage, so enjoy when they are at the peak of harvest in the winter months.

For the Crust:

1 recipe pâte sucrée (this page)

1 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary (optional)

For the Meyer Lemon Curd:

80 g fresh Meyer lemon juice

2 Tbsp. Meyer lemon zest

150 g granulated sugar

4 large eggs

Pinch of salt

115 g unsalted butter

For the Garnish:

1 Meyer or common lemon, thinly sliced

Prepare the Crust: Follow the instructions on this page for pâte sucrée, whisking in the rosemary with the flour if using. Shape into a small rectangle and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day.

Preheat your oven to 350°F and remove the dough from the fridge. Allow it to soften at room temperature for about 5 minutes. Roll out onto a lightly floured surface to about ¼-inch thickness. Using your rolling pin, roll the crust loosely around the pin and transfer it to the tart form. Cut off any excess from the edges and gently press the dough into the sides of the pan. Blind bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until the edges appear firm but not brown, and cool on a wire rack.

Make the Curd: In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, zest, sugar, eggs, and salt. Place in a saucepan and heat over medium-low, stirring frequently until a thick consistency is achieved, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the butter until melted. The mixture should be silky and smooth. If necessary, run it through a coarse sieve to remove any curdled lumps.

Assemble the Tart: Lower the oven temperature to 320°F. Pour the curd into the prepared tart crust and arrange the lemon slices on top.

Bake for 15 minutes, or until the curd has set. Allow to cool completely and serve with whipped cream.

Lemon Madeleines

Lemon Madeleines

Makes 12 large cookies

Using sourdough is an unconventional approach to this classically sweet French cookie. Fragrant with lemon zest, these buttery confections have a wonderful, crunchy outer texture and a soft crumb. If you'd like a little flair, try adding ¾ tsp. crushed lavender or thyme to the batter.

Several varieties of citrus—including the lemon, citron, and lime—were once lumped together as *Citrus medica.* These well-known and widely used fruits are actually ovoid-berries, at least in botanical terms, and have more recently been given their own species designations. In general, this genus is a promiscuous one, easily cross-pollinating to form slight variations in flavor and fruit character.

75 g pastry flour
½ tsp. baking powder
Pinch of salt
90 g granulated sugar
Zest from 2 small lemons (preferably Meyer)
2 large eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
50 g 100% hydration starter
85 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Preheat your oven to 350°F and butter a madeleine pan. In a small bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, and salt together. Set aside. In a separate bowl, combine the sugar and zest, smooshing with a spoon to release the fragrant oils. Add the eggs and beat until thick and somewhat fluffy. Beat in the vanilla and starter until evenly combined. Add the flour mixture in small

batches and lightly mix. Incorporate the cooled butter and stir until smooth. Evenly divide the batter among the molds.

Bake on the middle rack for about 12 to 13 minutes, until the edges are golden brown. Remove to a wire rack and cool completely, then dust with powdered sugar before serving.

Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka

Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka

Makes one 4½ × 8½-inch loaf or two 3¼ × 5¾-inch loaves

For every mother, grandmother, aunt, and sister, there is a different Old World *babka* recipe. Originating in Eastern Europe, it is a beloved and indulgent treat that has found its way into so many kitchens that there is often a heated debate about whose might be the best. There are as many opinions as there are matriarchs! If you manage to stow enough away, this rich bread makes an excellent *bostock* or French toast the next day.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter
85 g water
85 g bread flour

For the Babka Dough:

200 g leaven
170 g whole milk
1 large egg, beaten
60 g unsalted butter, melted
60 g granulated sugar
305 g bread flour
55 g whole wheat pastry flour
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
9 g salt

For the Chocolate Currant Filling:

60 g unsalted butter
130 g bittersweet chocolate pieces
¾ tsp. ground cinnamon
90 g dried currants
1 large egg yolk
Dash of cream

Build the Leaven: Six to eight hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, add the milk, egg, butter, and sugar and stir to combine. Add the flours and cinnamon and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle in the salt and knead on a work surface for about 5 minutes. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 40 minutes so it gains strength.

Prepare the Babka: Grease your tin(s) well and set aside. In a double boiler, melt the butter for the chocolate swirl. Add the pieces of chocolate and the cinnamon and stir until dissolved, then set aside to cool. Transfer the dough to a well-floured surface and roll out to about 6½ × 12 inches. Spread the chocolate mixture evenly over the dough and then sprinkle the currants on top. With your dough scraper, begin rolling up the dough lengthwise to create a coil. Once the coil is complete, pinch the seam and ends together to seal and lightly roll to elongate. Place on a baking sheet and cover with plastic and then put into the freezer for 15 minutes, or until the dough has firmed up. Cut in half lengthwise. Place one piece on top of the other and twist around each other, about 4 to 5 turns. This will be a little messy if the dough is not firm. Cut in half and twist around each other again, creating a quadruple twister. Pinch the ends under and nestle the babka inside the tin. Cover with a towel and then plastic and store in the refrigerator for at least 8 hours for optimal flavor. This dough will hold well

for several days in the refrigerator, or freeze it for several weeks. If doing this, allow to thaw in the fridge.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and preheat your oven to 375°F. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream to make the egg wash. Brush the top of the loaf with the wash and bake without steam for about 55 to 60 minutes, until golden, rotating halfway through. Lower the temperature to 325°F and bake for 10 minutes or until the internal dough temperature is about 185°F–190°F and the top is dark brown. Allow to cool completely before slicing.

Apricot and Pistachio Swirls

Apricot and Pistachio Swirls

Makes 12 rolls in an 8½ × 11-inch dish

These are a delicious variation of the Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka made into a cinnamon-roll-type breakfast treat.

1 recipe babka dough (see this page)
1 recipe hard sauce (see this page)

For the Apricot Pistachio Filling:
60 g pistachios
30 g granulated sugar
155 g whole dried apricots
60 g unsalted butter
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
25 g rum
20 g mild honey

Follow the Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka recipe (this page) until you are ready to roll out your dough.

Butter your baking dish generously and set aside. In a food processor, pulse together the pistachios and sugar until fine. Add the rest of the filling ingredients and process until a thick paste forms. Roll out your dough to about ¼-inch thickness, approximately 7 × 18 inches. Spread your mixture over the dough surface, leaving a ½-inch edge. Roll up the dough lengthwise into a coil, cover with plastic, and put in the freezer to firm up for about 15 minutes. Remove from the freezer and take off the plastic. With a sharp knife, slice into 12 even pieces about 1½-inch thick. Nestle the slices into the dish, cut sides up, cover with plastic, and store in the fridge overnight.

When ready to bake, preheat your oven to 375°F and remove the rolls from the refrigerator. Remove the plastic and bake for about 30 minutes, or until a nice golden brown. Dress with the hard sauce.

Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake

Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake

Makes two 3½ × 6-inch mini loaves

When Old Man Winter starts getting long in the tooth, along comes kumquat season to brighten the palate and conjure some sunshine. Although I've been known to eat a whole mini loaf in one sitting, this spicy, tender cake is intense in flavor and best served in small portions. The warming chili is a welcome companion to citrus and cinnamon, which are grounded by the combination of chocolate and rye. When you can't source kumquats, other thin-skinned citrus fruits such as clementines will do.

150 g kumquats, quartered and seeded (about 25 kumquats)
150 g panela sugar, grated
185 g unsalted butter, cut into chunks
1 large egg
Yolk of 1 large egg
1 tsp. vanilla extract
130 g 100% hydration starter
95 g medium-grind rye flour
50 g cocoa powder
¾ tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¾ tsp. finely ground chipotle chili
¾ tsp. salt
60 g hazelnuts, toasted, skinned, and coarsely chopped

Preheat your oven to 350°F and lightly grease the tins. In a small saucepan, cook the kumquats and panela over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until syrupy, 8 to 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and stir in the butter until

melted. Transfer to a medium bowl and set aside to cool. Beat in the egg, egg yolk, and vanilla. Add the starter and stir with a fork until combined.

In a separate small bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking soda, spices, and salt. Stir the dry ingredients into the kumquat mixture, small batches at a time, being careful not to overmix. Stir in the hazelnuts, saving a few for topping, and divide the batter between the tins. Sprinkle the remaining nuts on top.

Bake for 18 to 22 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center tests clean. These cakes will keep well for several days if stored in an airtight container.

Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream

Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream

Makes 30 to 32 two-inch tartlets

Japanese sweet potatoes are the Satsuma-imo variety of *Ipomoea batatas* that appear in American markets in the late autumn and winter months. They are a fleeting crop but keep well in cold storage. Sweep them up when you see them, as you will be pleasantly surprised by their sweet white flesh that tastes like roasted chestnut. Paired here with blood orange and almonds, they make a quiet-looking dessert with comforting flavors for the winter palate. Serve sprinkled with finely chopped candied citrus peel. You may purchase candied citrus peel from a specialty grocer or make your own. I prefer to prepare a large batch in winter when citrus is at its peak and freeze for use during the rest of the year.

For the Candied Citrus Peel:

60 g citrus peel of choice (oranges, grapefruits, lemons, and limes all work well)

55 g water

85 g granulated sugar

For the Crust:

100 g whole raw almonds

30 g granulated sugar

140 g whole wheat pastry flour

Pinch of salt

115 g cold unsalted butter

75 g 100% hydration starter

1 Tbsp. vodka or water, ice cold

For the Blood Orange Curd:

45 g unsalted butter
35 g mild honey
1 Tbsp. orange zest
30 g blood orange juice
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 large egg
4 egg yolks

Japanese Sweet Potato Cream:

450 g Japanese sweet potato (about 1 sweet potato)
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground ginger
225 g heavy whipping cream
10 g granulated sugar
20 g maple syrup

Make the Candied Peel: Running a sharp knife down the sides of the citrus fruit, remove the peel, leaving behind as much pith as possible. (If using grapefruit, you may need to further scrape the inside of the peel with a dull knife or spoon.) Slice into thin pieces, about ⅛ inch wide. Place in a saucepan and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and then drain. Repeat this two more times to remove any bitterness from the pith. Return the peel to the saucepan and add the 55 g of water and the sugar. Boil for about 15 minutes, until the peel begins to show translucency. Remove with a slotted spoon and cool overnight on a wire rack placed over parchment. Roll in superfine sugar if desired. These will keep for up to 1 year if stored in an airtight container in the freezer.

Prepare the Crust Dough: Place the raw almonds and sugar in the bowl of a food processor and chop until a fine powder is achieved. Add the flour and salt and pulse to combine. Cut in the butter, pulsing until it reaches a coarse crumb texture. Add the starter and the vodka, pulsing until the dough

just comes together. The dough will feel softer than normal, but this is OK. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and form into a flat disk.

Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Make the Curd: In a small saucepan, heat the butter and honey together over low heat just until the butter melts. Stir in the zest and juices and set aside. In a small bowl, beat together the egg and egg yolks and slowly beat into the honey and butter mixture. Heat over low, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon. Set aside to cool.

Prepare the Sweet Potato Cream: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Roast one large sweet potato on a lined baking sheet for 45 to 60 minutes, until tender to a fork. Remove and let cool. Scoop out 200 g of the soft flesh and run through a sieve into a medium bowl. Add the spices and stir to combine. In a separate medium bowl, beat the whipped cream together with the sugar and maple syrup. Fold into the sweet potato mixture and refrigerate until ready to use.

Bake the Crusts: While the roasted sweet potato is cooling, remove the crust dough from the refrigerator. Allow to soften at room temperature, about 5 minutes. Roll out onto a lightly floured surface. Using a 2½-inch cutter, make as many circles as you can and drop them into the wells of a mini muffin pan, pressing gently into the sides. Blind bake for 12 to 15 minutes at 375°F, until the edges are a golden brown. Remove and cool on a wire rack.

Assemble the Tartlets: Place spoonfuls of the curd into the cooled tart shells. Spoon the cream into a piping bag and decorate the tops of the tartlets. Garnish with candied citrus peel and chill before serving.

Dark Chocolate Buckwheat Cookies

Makes approximately fifteen 4-inch cookies

These rich and dark whole-grain cookies have a crunchy, almost scone-like quality that is delicious dunked in a cup of milk or steaming-hot coffee. If their high cocoa content isn't enough chocolate flavor for you, try adding some dark chocolate chips to make these a more decadent treat.

140 g unsalted butter, softened
170 g granulated sugar
145 g bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled
100 g 100% hydration starter
145 g buckwheat flour
15 g unsweetened cocoa
2 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
145 g walnuts, toasted

Preheat your oven to 375°F. Cream together the butter and sugar with a handheld mixer until pale and fluffy. Add the melted chocolate and mix until blended. Mix in the starter with a fork just until it begins to separate.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt. Add a third of the flour mixture at a time to the chocolate mixture until all the ingredients are combined. Fold in the walnuts. Place large spoonfuls of the dough onto a lined cookie sheet and bake for 7 to 8 minutes, until the edges feel firm. Cool on a wire rack, then store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

6 | Spring Rebirth

BREADS

BROOKLYN SOURDOUGH

SEEDED TURMERIC AND LEEK LEVAIN

GARLIC AND *NIGELLA* NAAN

NETTLE AND ALE BREAD

PLOUGHMAN'S LOAF

SAVORIES

FIDDLEHEAD PIZZA

GARLIC MUSTARD PESTO

VERNAL TART IN A HAZELNUT CRUST

PORK AND RHUBARB POT PIE

SPRING TARTLETS

DANDELION AND CHIVE POPOVERS

BURDOCK BURGERS

BUTTERMILK BISCUITS

SAVORY KALE SCONES

SWEETS

CANDIED CITRUS SHORTBREAD

PARSLEY AND HERB DOUGHNUTS

STRAWBERRY AND CARDAMOM DUTCH BABY

STRAWBERRY COFFEE CAKE

HONEY ROSE CAKE

COCONUT AND LYCHEE CUPCAKES

LILAC SUGAR

LILAC HONEY

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL

COMPOUND BUTTERS

MANY WHO LOVE BAKING BREAD WITH NATURAL LEAVENING ALSO LOVE THE CHARACTER OF SPRING. THE HUMBLE INGREDIENTS OF FLOUR, WATER, AND SALT CAN CREATE SOMETHING QUITE ASTONISHING, AKIN TO THE DISPLAY OF COLOR THAT bursts forth from seemingly fallow ground every year. Spring resurrects the spirit from quiet dormancy with a flurry of life, which gains momentum with the lengthening of daylight. Trees sport a fresh green that glows neon from the tips of their branches, braving lingering flurries and winter's reluctance to pass. As this burgeoning life salutes melting snow and gentle showers, the gardener embarks on yearly preparation of the ground, eagerly ready to sow seed. Tasks are scheduled, muddy knees are common, and the race to align with nature's growth rhythms commences.

Every season inspires anticipation for the next's bounty. But there is a strong sense of hope and optimism with the vernal equinox, as spring is the season of preparation for the rest of the year's harvests. Winter wheat that is sown in autumn, so prized for its high protein and robust yield, resumes growth and sends forth flowering stalks that ripen to nourishing maturity in the coming months. This cold treatment is known as vernalization, which appropriately stems from the Latin word *vernus*, meaning "of the spring." Perhaps it is true of us as well, our eagerness to awaken all the more concentrated after prolonged latency.

Natural fermentation responds with enthusiasm to spring as well. Decelerated by a chilly winter kitchen, it returns to active buoyancy and a fervor to leaven. In the right temperature, the mother once again returns to its primordial beginnings. The senses that have awakened to the pleasing smell of wet earth, sprouting seedlings, and blossoming trees sharpen with the aroma of a robust, naturally leavened loaf emerging from the oven.

The recipes in this chapter embrace the long-awaited opportunity to use fresh flavors, add some color into our diets, and nourish our bodies with hearty food to help bear the last cool days and labor-intensive chores of spring.

Brooklyn Sourdough

Brooklyn Sourdough

Makes 2 loaves

There are many opinions about what is a true sourdough. The usual consensus is just that most versions are never as acidic as they should be.

I try to embrace the qualities that my mild white starter naturally imparts, harnessing its ambitious nature to leaven my breads. I have used a stiffer leaven, giving the final dough a stronger character with layers of flavor rather than just a sour, curdled one-hit punch. But I prefer the creamy flavor and texture of a liquid leaven that only ferments for 4 to 8 hours. When this leaven is added after the flours are hydrated and autolyzed, the dough develops unique strength. It is a particularly helpful technique when using flour with weak character or high enzymatic activity.

These large loaves have impressive oven spring, a medium open crumb, and the crispy yet chewy crust that every sourdough should have. It is a versatile dough that can be rolled in seeds before the final proof. It also lends itself well to many shapes, such as boules, batards, and epis. Have fun with scoring, but remember to make a few deeper cuts to accommodate this bread's impressive expansion.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

65 g water

65 g bread flour

For the Dough:

620 g water

605 g bread flour

200 g whole wheat flour

16 g sea salt

160 g leaven

Build the Leaven: Six hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and stir to combine. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature until bubbly.

Build the Dough: Combine the water and flours in a medium bowl and mix until the flour is hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 1 to 2 hours, letting the gluten proteins assemble and build strength.

Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix with the leaven until it is completely incorporated and no visible streaks remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Remove the dough from the bowl and perform the slap-and-fold method (this page) for 5 to 6 minutes to further build strength. Cover and allow to bulk proof for 3 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape according to preference and place seam-side up in floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 24 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Seeded Turmeric and Leek Levain

Seeded Turmeric and Leek Levain

Makes 2 loaves

Curcuma longa, or turmeric, is a culinary spice closely related to ginger that is prized for its warming properties and healing, anti-inflammatory powers. Its chief active component, curcumin, has been shown to be an effective preventive for many diseases and helps relieve the symptoms of other chronic illnesses, most notably arthritis. When combined with other spices such as black pepper, which aids in absorption, and members of the *Allium* genus of cancer fighters, it makes a powerful bread that is impressive in both flavor and presentation. This loaf makes delicious sandwiches filled with a wide variety of ingredients including curried egg salad.

For the Leaven:

50 g 100% hydration starter

50 g water

50 g bread flour

For the Dough:

150 g leaven

525 g water

485 g bread flour

150 g high-extraction wheat flour

75 g whole wheat flour

40 g medium-grind rye flour

15 g salt

Fold-ins:

185 g leeks or mature Shimonita onions, cut into 1-inch slices

40 g extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp. ground turmeric
½ tsp. black pepper
50 g shallots, diced
10 g poppy seeds
15 g flaxseeds

Prepare the Fold-ins: Place the leeks, oil, turmeric, and pepper in a skillet over medium heat and sauté until the leeks are soft and beginning to brown, about 5 to 7 minutes. Turn off the heat and toss in the shallots and seeds. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and stir with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, add the water and stir to combine. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until incorporated. Add the leek mixture and work into the dough until no yellow streaks remain. Allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, turn out onto a lightly floured work surface. Divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape in your desired form and place seam-side up in a well-floured banneton or couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for up to 24 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Garlic and *Nigella* Naan

Makes 6 flatbreads

Nigella sativa, or black cumin, is a plant native to southern Asia, but its seeds were highly prized in ancient Egyptian times. *Nigella* species have an exotic pale white or blue flower surrounded by an involucre of pinnate stem leaves that exceed the floral organs, giving rise to the common name Love-in-a-Mist. The small black seeds harvested from *N. sativa* are delightfully aromatic and give a remarkable pungency to this flatbread, which is a delicious accompaniment to Indian or Middle Eastern–inspired dishes.

You may bake these delicious flatbreads on a preheated hearthstone or, alternatively, on an outdoor grill for authentic flavor.

400 g 100% hydration starter, refreshed
225 g water
55 g extra-virgin olive oil
90 g whole yogurt
15 g granulated sugar
825 g all-purpose flour
9 g sea salt
1 head of green garlic or a handful of scapes, finely chopped
2 tsp. *Nigella* seeds
Melted butter (optional)

In a large bowl, stir together the starter, water, oil, yogurt, and sugar. Add the flour and mix until completely hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 30 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix to incorporate. Fold in the garlic and *Nigella* seeds. Cover and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours at room temperature. Alternatively,

you may wish to cover with plastic and store in the fridge for up to 36 hours.

When the dough is puffy and its size has increased considerably, preheat your hearthstone in the oven or outdoor grill to 475°F. Turn out the dough onto a well-floured surface. Divide into 6 equal pieces and shape into balls. Cover the balls with plastic as you work to prevent them from drying. With a floured rolling pin, work each ball into an oblong shape until it is about ¼-inch thick and lay onto a floured couche. Cover to proof while the oven or grill is heating.

Carefully transfer each piece of dough onto the hot stone or grill, fitting as many as you can. Cook for 4 to 6 minutes on each side, until they are somewhat charred and bubbly. Remove from the oven or grill and brush with butter if desired. Serve immediately.

***Allium spp.* (Green garlic)**

Green garlic (sometimes called spring garlic) is a tender, less pungent version of mature *Allium ophioscorodon* and *A. sativum*—the hardneck and softneck garlic bulbs, respectively, that we all know well. Pulled up in early spring when the garlic patch needs thinning, these tender bulbs can be used as a mild, nutty-sweet alternative to onions or shallots in baking. No need to peel them; just remove the tough stem portion, chop, and fold into the dough. Or you may use other parts of the garlic plant at various points in the season: garlic scapes, the flower buds before bloom, or even just a clove or two of mature garlic.

Nettle and Ale Bread

Nettle and Ale Bread

Makes 2 loaves

Urtica dioica, commonly known as the stinging nettle, has a long history of being used medicinally and as a food source. More than just sustenance for humans, it is also a preferred food source for beneficial garden insects and butterfly caterpillars. It is anything but coy in harvesting, as most nettles sport stinging hairs that create a painful paresthesia. Other, gentler varieties may be cultivated, but nettles spread aggressively by underground rhizomes. Left unchecked, they will push their way through garden beds, staking claim to any free territory. If stray runners are regularly harvested before flowering renders them tough and fibrous, you can manage a perennial patch, which offers a delicious source of greens during the spring months. Protect your hands with gloves when harvesting or foraging, and cut regularly to prevent flowering and encourage tender side shoots.

Ironically, nettles boast anti-inflammatory compounds used to treat arthritis and are loaded with vitamins A and C, iron, manganese, potassium, and calcium. They lose their sting once cooked and have a rich flavor akin to spinach. Used in abundance in this bread, they lend moistness with a yeasty ale flavor to the crumb. Toasted and cooked millet may also be added for a little extra texture.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

30 g water

55 g whole wheat flour

For the Dough:

115 g leaven

340 g ale, at room temperature
85 g water
20 g honey
½ Tbsp. orange zest
400 g bread flour
115 g high-extraction wheat flour
50 g millet flour
11 g sea salt

Fold-ins:
60 g nettles, washed, dried, and chopped

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to build your dough, mix the leaven. Combine the starter and water in a large bowl and stir to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix until it is hydrated and no lumps remain. It should resemble a stiff dough. Cover with plastic and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is puffy and active, add the ale, water, honey, and zest, breaking apart the leaven with your fingers. Add the flours and mix with your hands until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Fold in the nettles. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and active, transfer to the counter. Divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. Final shape to your desired form and place seam-side up into floured bannetons or a couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for 8 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Ploughman’s Loaf

Ploughman’s Loaf

Makes 2 loaves

Early in my bread education, the Internet was one of my greatest resources. Curious about the history of the Ploughman’s Lunch, I turned to the trusty World Wide Web for a quick orientation. As is often the case with the Internet, I discovered rather amusing and crude urban slang suggesting erotic connotations. This left a lasting impression, and when I developed this sensual dough, I decided to anoint it with the same name. Frankly, all of this is much more interesting than the classic British definition of “a loaf to accompany an English cold lunch.” My favorite all-purpose flour to use in this bread is made with Sonoran wheat. If you can’t source this beautiful creamy flour, any variety of soft wheat flour will do.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

50 g water

50 g bread flour

For the Dough:

525 g water

325 g einkorn flour, fine or sifted

230 g bread flour

100 g all-purpose flour

13 g sea salt

130 g leaven

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form

a slurry. Add the flour and mix with your hand. It should feel somewhat stiff. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: Combine the water and flours in a medium bowl and mix until the flour is hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 1 hour, allowing the gluten proteins to assemble and build strength.

Smear the leaven into the dough, mixing with your hands until it is completely incorporated and no visible streaks remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 to 30 minutes.

Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Cover and allow to bulk proof for 1 hour, turning and folding after 30 minutes. Turn and fold once more, cover with a towel and then plastic, and place in the refrigerator to finish the bulk proof.

Shape the Bread: After retarding for 6 to 8 hours in the refrigerator, turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 30 minutes. Final shape according to preference and place seam-side up in well-floured bannetons. The final rise will require an additional hour or so before it has proofed and is ready for the oven.

Bake according to the instructions on this page and this page. Because of the high moisture content of this dough, lower the oven temperature to 460°F after the first 20 minutes, if baking in a Dutch oven, or after the first 12 to 14 minutes if baking on a hearthstone.

Fiddlehead Pizza

Fiddlehead Pizza

Makes one 10-inch pizza

A few years ago a fellow woodsman and I took a trip to Maine to climb the famed Mt. Katahdin. It rained every single day except one, and we were lucky to peer down the Knife's Edge through the clouds as we scrambled our way to safety before the next downpour. It was one of the highlights of the trip but didn't overshadow the copious amounts of ferns and mushrooms underfoot! I had never seen such a forest; it was a veritable fairyland. Fortunately my friend is a committed student of fungi, and between the two of us, we ate foraged mushrooms every single meal.

Pizza is one of the easiest and most satisfying meals that can highlight whatever seasonal ingredients you have available. Fiddleheads and mushrooms such as enokitake, chanterelles, and black trumpets are used here with cress for just enough bite to seal the experience. With slight variations, you can use whole grains for the crust as well, but in this recipe, I prefer the simple, clean palate and performance of clear and finely ground "00" flour. The following is a classic sourdough crust requiring about 10 minutes of active time. It has a light and airy interior and slightly chewy character. If you cannot source "00" flour, you may substitute all-purpose flour.

Delice des Cremiers with Truffles is an agreeable triple-cream cow's cheese that is a decadent choice for this pie. It can be sourced from Murray's Cheese or other specialty mongers. If your selection is limited, taleggio, robiola, mozzarella, or even a simple crumbled goat cheese will do in a pinch.

For the Pizza Dough:

30 g 100% hydration starter, refreshed (fed)

130 g water
5 g extra-virgin olive oil
180 g Antimo Caputo “00” flour
A generous pinch of sea salt

For the Toppings:
30 g extra-virgin olive oil
8–10 sprigs fresh spring watercress
70–80 g Garlic Mustard Pesto (this page)
4 prosciutto slices (optional)
1 handful of wild mushrooms
13–15 fiddleheads
150–175 g Delice des Cremiers with Truffles cheese

Build the Dough: Eight hours before baking your pizza, stir together the starter, water, and oil in a small bowl. Add the flour and salt and mix until the flour is completely hydrated and a soft dough forms. Remove the dough, clean the bowl and lightly oil it, and replace the dough, rolling to coat. Cover with plastic and leave at room temperature until the dough at least doubles in size.

Assemble the Pizza: Preheat your baking stone to 550°F (or as hot as you can get it!) and prepare the pizza crust. Remove the dough from the bowl and pat out onto a well-floured surface. Press from the center outward using floured fingertips, careful to leave an untouched and puffy lip. When it is about half the size you desire, transfer to a parchment-lined and cornmeal-dusted baking sheet or a pizza peel generously dusted with cornmeal. Work until you are satisfied with the thickness of the crust.

Toss the oil and watercress together. Drain the excess oil onto the crust and use a pastry brush to coat. Next evenly apply the pesto, leaving a 1½-inch edge. Arrange the prosciutto first, layering on the cress, mushrooms, and fiddleheads successively after. Top with generous dollops of cheese.

If boldly skipping the parchment and instead preparing the pie directly on your peel, shake to make sure it doesn’t stick before attempting to load into the oven. Otherwise, transfer the pie by the parchment onto the preheated hearthstone. Bake for 12 to 14 minutes, rotating halfway through, until the cheese is bubbly and the crust is golden. If you desire a more charred flavor, remove the parchment paper and finish under the broiler for the last 2 to 3 minutes. Dress with fresh sprigs of cress and serve warm or at room temperature.

Garlic Mustard Pesto

Makes 300 grams

Alliaria petiolata is a noxious invasive weed whose coarse heart-shaped leaves appear in early spring. Harvest when they first emerge to avoid any bitterness, especially before they come into flower.

80 g young garlic mustard leaves
60 g walnuts, toasted
3 garlic cloves
50 g grated Parmesan
100 g extra-virgin olive oil
Juice of 1 small lemon
½ tsp. chili flakes
2 tsp. salt

Soak and thoroughly clean the garlic mustard, discarding stems and any large leaves that might be bitter. In the bowl of a food processor, combine the walnuts with garlic and chop until coarse. Add the garlic mustard leaves along with the Parmesan, oil, lemon juice, chili flakes, and salt. Process the ingredients until a smooth liquid paste is formed, adding more oil as needed to achieve your desired consistency.

Vernal Tart in a Hazelnut Crust

Vernal Tart in a Hazelnut Crust

Makes one 8¼ × 11¼-inch tart

If sourced responsibly, early spring ramps with their potent garlic odor and pronounced onion flavor can enliven anything, from pesto to quiche. Used here in a delicious spring tart, their flavor is mellowed by a mushroom and goat cheese filling. When you don't have access to ramps, using only Swiss chard makes an equally delicious and beautiful version.

For the Hazelnut Crust:

130 g raw hazelnuts
15 g raw sugar
150 g whole wheat flour
85 g cold unsalted butter
100 g 100% hydration starter
30–40 g vodka or water, ice cold

For the Filling:

45 g onion, chopped
200 g cremini mushrooms, chopped
30 g extra-virgin olive oil
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg or mace
½ tsp. salt
Black pepper to taste
115 g soft fresh goat cheese
1 large egg, beaten
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon
320 g whole ramps, ends trimmed

320 g Swiss chard

Make the Crust: In a food processor, combine the hazelnuts and sugar and process until finely ground. Add the flour and pulse until combined. Add the butter in chunks and pulse until a coarse meal forms. Use a spoon to evenly distribute the starter in the bowl of the processor and pulse, adding water or vodka as needed, just until the dough starts to come together.

Turn out the dough onto a work surface and lightly knead once or twice, just until the dough comes together. Flatten into a rectangle about 6 × 8 inches and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours.

Preheat your oven to 400°F. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and allow to soften at room temperature, about 10 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, flatten it as much as you can into a rectangle and then transfer to the tart pan. This crust does not favor rolling. Press into the form using your fingertips, making sure to press evenly into all sides. Prick the bottom with a fork and blind bake for about 20 minutes, rotating it halfway through. Remove from the oven and let cool.

Prepare the Filling: In a skillet, sauté the onion and mushrooms in 15 g of the oil for 8 to 10 minutes, and season with the nutmeg and salt, and pepper to taste. They are done when the onions show a nice brown color and the water released from the mushrooms has cooked off. In a food processor, process the goat cheese, egg, and tarragon until smooth. Chop the ramps and Swiss chard and sauté in a skillet with the remaining 15 g of the oil until wilted, about 4 to 5 minutes. Drain off the excess water.

Assemble the Tart: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Spread the mixture evenly over the cooled crust. Spread the chopped ramps and chard over the top. Place in the oven.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, until the ramps-and-chard topping seems soft, retaining the color of the stems. Cool completely and serve at room temperature.

***Allium tricoccum* (Wild garlic, ramps)**

I am hesitant to recommend the use of *Allium tricoccum*, otherwise known as wild garlic or ramps. Their growth cycle is slow, with germination requiring anywhere from six to eighteen months. Once germinated, it can take five to seven years for a plant to mature from seed. Naturally occurring under a canopy of deciduous eastern North American forests, their trendy culinary usage has led to overforaging of wild populations. Thankfully, their popularity has proven them to be a viable commercial crop.

Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie

Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie

Makes one 7½ × 10 × 2¼-inch pot pie

It always seems that when you are known for using an ingredient well, it comes into your possession from generous and hungry friends. Each spring, the Curator of the Herb Garden at BBG would gift me armfuls of rhubarb with hopes I would reciprocate with baked goods. I had to get creative and was mindful not to always appear with a sweet dessert in hand. This recipe uses the acidity of rhubarb to draw out the bold and spicy flavors of the roast pork. The sweetness of dried fruit mellows the rhubarb, which, when topped with a flaky and golden crust, makes for a savory seasonal treat.

Spring gardening is always hectic, regardless of how prepared you think you are after a long winter of planning. I reserve this recipe for days when I know I won't have time to cook dinner. By using a slow cooker to cook the pork, the spices are able to seep into the tender meat, which is ready about the time I come home and kick off my muddy boots.

The puff pastry must be prepared ahead and refrigerated for at least 30 minutes and up to 12 hours. Alternatively, use pastry you've made ahead and frozen, and let it thaw on the day you wish to make the pie.

1 recipe rough puff pastry (see this page)

For the Cocoa-Spiced Pork Chops:

1½ Tbsp. cocoa powder

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground cumin

¼ tsp. ground clove

½ tsp. chili flakes
½ tsp. dried oregano
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1 tsp. orange zest
1-inch piece fresh ginger, grated
1 kg (2¼ lb.) country-style pork ribs, bone in
½ tsp. sea salt
2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
40 g dark honey
Juice of 1 orange
1 shallot, chopped

For the Pork Filling:
Cocoa-spiced pork chops (see left)
370 g fresh rhubarb, chopped into
1-inch pieces
45 g leeks, cleaned and chopped to 1-inch pieces
50 g dried cherries or golden raisins
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
¼ tsp. ground allspice
15 g all-purpose flour
½ tsp. sea salt
25 g mild honey
15 g red wine vinegar
75 g chicken stock

For the Egg Wash:
Yolk of 1 large egg
Dash of cream

Prepare the puff pastry and chill, or allow to thaw if frozen.

Prepare the Spiced Pork Chops: In a bowl, whisk together the cocoa powder, spices, chili flakes, and oregano. Add the garlic, orange zest, and ginger and toss. If you have a mortar and pestle, use it to pound this into a paste; otherwise you can pulse in a food processor. Season the pork chops with the salt and then roll and rub them in the spice mixture. Allow to rest for at least 30 minutes or overnight in the fridge for better flavor.

In a skillet heat the oil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and sear the chops on each side until brown, about 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the pan and transfer to a slow cooker. Add the honey, orange juice, and shallot, and simmer over low for about 8 hours.

Prepare the Pork Filling: Preheat your oven to 425°F. Debone and shred the spiced pork chops and set aside. In a saucepan toss the rhubarb, leeks, cherries, spices, flour, and salt. Add the honey, vinegar, and stock and cook over medium heat just until soft. Turn off the heat, add the shredded pork, and stir until combined.

Assemble the Pie: Transfer the pork filling to your baking dish. Roll out the puff pastry to about ¼- to ⅓-inch thick. Cover the filling with the puff pastry, allowing just a bit to overhang the dish to accommodate shrinkage. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream to make an egg wash. You can use any excess pastry to make pretty designs like leaves or rosettes on top of the pie. Use egg wash like a glue to adhere the decorations. Or just simply score a pretty pattern into the surface of the puff with a knife. Brush the whole pastry with egg wash.

Bake for about 50 to 60 minutes, or until the crust is a deep golden color and flaky when pierced with a knife. Serve warm.

Spring Tartlets

Spring Tartlets

Makes eight approximately 3 × 4-inch tartlets

Peas and asparagus are fresh seasonal candidates for placing on a bed of ricotta-smeared puff pastry. Using microgreens to finish the presentation, these little tartlets are almost too pretty to eat. If you wish to make these after the summer solstice, try substituting the vegetable topping with thin zucchini, capers, red bell pepper, and squash blossoms.

The puff pastry must be prepared ahead and refrigerated for at least 30 minutes and up to 12 hours.

One of the first items to appear at farmer's markets in spring is microgreens. Peppered among the remnants of tired and gnarly root vegetables are these cheerful sprouts in various stages of life, colors, and textures. They are a striking juxtaposition against winter's lingering produce, and although nights may still require fuzzy sweaters, they are proof that the season is changing.

1 recipe rough puff pastry (see this page)

For the Filling:

125 g fresh ricotta

1 large egg, beaten

1½ tsp. lemon zest

1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves

Pinch of sea salt and black pepper

4 asparagus spears, trimmed

50 g shelled peas

15 g extra-virgin olive oil

For the Egg Wash:
Yolk of 1 large egg
Dash of cream

For the Dressing:
Handful of microgreens, such as *Claytonia virginica* or *Claytonia perfoliata*
15 g white wine vinegar or rice vinegar

Prepare the puff pastry and chill, or allow to thaw if frozen.

Preheat your oven to 400°F. In a small bowl, whisk the ricotta, egg, lemon zest, thyme, salt, and pepper until smooth and set aside. Quarter the asparagus spears and toss with olive oil. Roll out the puff pastry to about 3 times as long as it is wide (about 6–7 × 17–18 inches). Trim off any uneven edges and cut into eight even rectangles approximately 3 × 4 inches. Spread a generous layer of ricotta mixture to about ½ inch from the border. With a paring knife, lightly score a border ½ inch from the edges. Arrange 2 pieces of asparagus on top. In a small bowl, whisk the egg yolk and cream together to make an egg wash and brush over the edge of the tartlets.

Bake for about 20 minutes, or until the crust is a deep golden color and the ricotta starts to brown slightly. Remove from oven and toss the peas with the microgreens and vinegar. Use this to dress the tarts and serve immediately.

Dandelion and Chive Popovers

Dandelion and Chive Popovers

Makes 6 to 8 popovers

It took me a very long time to find a place that felt like home in New York City. Bouncing around from one living situation to the next, I wondered why I had given up my little cottage in the woods of East Tennessee for the concrete hustle. Eventually I landed in an apartment in a house shared by an eclectic and friendly group of people. A brewer, a pickler, and the world's tiniest bread enthusiast I've ever met made for great backyard barbecues as well as some amazingly delicious communal dinners.

The first time I made these popovers was for an Easter celebration. My first recipe was good but not quite what I had hoped to achieve. Sourdough leavening can make some traditionally light and fluffy recipes a bit heavier. With a little tweaking, they became not only tasty but with enough impressive loft to share with friends. The key is to work with room-temperature ingredients, so pull them out of the fridge well in advance. Your best baking mold will be a nonstick popover pan, but well-greased ramekins or a muffin tin will work as well.

120 g bread flour
¾ tsp. salt
3 large eggs, beaten
100 g buttermilk
125 g whole milk
25 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled
15 g mild honey
100 g 100% hydration starter
3 Tbsp. chopped dandelion leaves

3 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives

Lightly grease your popover tin and place in the oven while you preheat it to 450°F. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and salt. In a separate large bowl, whisk together the eggs, buttermilk, milk, butter, and honey. Add the starter and beat with a fork until combined. Add the chopped dandelion and chives and stir. Add the dry ingredients to the wet one-third at a time, stirring to combine.

Remove your tin from the oven and fill the cups three-quarters full. Bake for about 15 minutes and then lower the temperature to 350°F. Bake for another 20 minutes, or until the tops are dark golden brown. These are best served directly from the oven.

***Arctium lappa* (Burdock)**

If you've ever been on a hike and returned home with large burs attached to your clothing or your pet's fur, you've most likely encountered the common burdock plant. Don't let those persistent seed heads annoy you; *Arctium lappa* is one of the most beautiful weeds around, with a versatile flavor and beneficial medicinal properties. Its large, wavy, heart-shaped leaves make up a basal rosette that can reach up to three feet wide, creating quite a bold statement in the landscape. It is easy to identify and is not often confused for other plants, as the leaves have a fuzzy white undergrowth that contrasts with the rugose green of the adaxial, or upper, side of the leaf. This expressive biennial often appears alongside the otherwise chaotic overgrowth of roadsides and disturbed areas, in fields, and at woodland's edge. I have taken to using it over the last few years for its cleansing properties. At a time when the liver is in overdrive (expressed as seasonal allergies), burdock is ripe for the picking, helping to stimulate, protect, and restore the body.

Burdock Burgers

Makes seven 4-inch patties

When foraged in late spring, burdock stems have a nutty flavor similar to artichoke hearts. This recipe combines them with the best of the rest of the season: ramps, chive blossoms, parsley, and a hint of apple to make a hearty burger-like patty. Harvest 3 to 4 flower stalks before buds develop and when they're no taller than 10 to 12 inches to ensure a mild flavor. If they are shorter, they will be more tender, but you will need 5 to 6 stems to yield enough for this recipe.

100 g 10-inch burdock stems
40 g apple (about ½ apple), finely chopped
4 whole ramps, finely chopped
10 chive blossom heads, fully open and florets separated
200 g cooked and drained lentils
40 g coarse bread crumbs
1½ Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
1 tsp. salt
3 large eggs
100 g 100% hydration starter
½ Tbsp. hot sauce, or to taste
15 g extra-virgin olive oil

To prepare the burdock, strip the leaves and their stalks from the main stem. (These are completely edible but have a tendency to be a little bitter. They can, however, be boiled and pickled for a healthy treat.) With your knife, peel away the thread-like ribs to reveal the inner stalk. Chop the inner stalk into ¼-inch pieces and place in a saucepan. Cover with water and boil for about 20 minutes or until tender. Drain, rinse, and place in a medium bowl.

Add the apple, ramps, chive blossoms, lentils, bread crumbs, parsley, and salt. Toss to mix. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs, starter, and hot sauce together with a fork until completely combined. Add to the burdock mixture and toss.

Place the oil in a heavy skillet or cast-iron pan and heat over medium for 1 to 2 minutes. Scoop a handful of the mixture into the pan, using a spatula to form a 4-inch patty about ½-inch thick. Fill the pan with several patties, leaving about ½-inch space in between. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes on each side, until a nice, evenly brown crust forms. These are delicious served warm or cold and keep well in the freezer for up to a few months if stored wrapped and in an airtight container. I prefer to eat them with a flavorful sauce, but they make for an easy sandwich as well.

Buttermilk Biscuits

Buttermilk Biscuits

Makes 9 biscuits

My Momma sighs every time I call to ask for her biscuit recipe. Patiently, she reminds me of the wise words my great grandmother—a Rubenesque, big-boned mountain woman—said to her when asked the same. Mamaw insisted that if you made biscuits often enough, you would learn the recipe. Well, fine. But I can't really publish that as a recipe, now can I?! Ambiguity is one thing, intuitive execution is another, but Momma wouldn't even reveal an estimated cup measurement. After half a dozen phone conversations with few hints other than "crumbled texture," "work fast," and "hot oven," I consulted a few more of my Southern resources. After much opinionated debate, I opted to omit the hydrogenated Crisco made popular during the postwar era and, strangely, still ubiquitous. Although my father's mother, Granny Owens, insisted lard was the better fat to use, I rely instead on pure, unadulterated butter for a flaky texture. If you can source cultured raw butter, these will perhaps come close to my family's mystery recipe. But they will never be better than Momma's!

230 g all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. sea salt
130 g unsalted butter
200 g 100% hydration starter, cold
120 ml cold buttermilk

Preheat your oven to 450°F. In a large bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flour, baking powder and soda, and salt.

Cut or pulse in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse, pea-sized crumbs. Working quickly, fold in the starter or pulse to combine. Mix in the buttermilk, small amounts at a time, until the dough comes together. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently a few times until the dough is consistent. Work in a light and quick manner, careful not to overwork it or to warm the butter with your hands. Pat out the dough to about 1¼-inch thick. Using a floured 3½-inch biscuit cutter, cut out the biscuits. If you want a softer and loftier biscuit, place them nestled side-by-side in a buttered baking dish. If you prefer a crispier crust, space apart on a lined sheet pan. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes, until golden brown. Serve warm.

Savory Kale Scones

Savory Kale Scones

Makes 8 scones

For this recipe, I prefer to use baby kale or flat Italian lacinato because it is easy to work into the dough. Curly or Russian kale will also work with some dexterous coaxing and can provide a beautiful finished texture. You may wonder how to incorporate all the kale called for in this recipe, but persevere, as it will greatly shrink once subjected to heat. In addition to producing a hearty and wholesome scone, this recipe is perfect if you have starter that needs to be refreshed and you want to avoid throwing any away.

For the Dough:

100 g whole wheat pastry flour
115 g all-purpose flour
1½ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. sea salt
60 g cold unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch chunks
45 g grated Parmesan or Asiago
200 g 100% hydration starter
60 g whole milk
2 large eggs

Fold-ins:

60 g onions (green or red are best), chopped
100 g mushrooms, chopped
75 g kale, chopped

For the Egg Wash:

Yolk of 1 large egg
Dash of cream

Preheat your oven to 400°F. Whisk together the flours, baking powder and soda, and salt in a medium bowl or combine in a food processor. Cut or pulse in the butter and Parmesan until coarse, pea-sized crumbs form. In a separate bowl, combine the starter, milk, and large eggs, and whisk until a thick consistency is reached. Add to the dry ingredients and fold in or pulse until the dough just starts to come together.

Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead a few times into a cohesive mass. Flatten into a 4 × 6-inch rectangle and layer on some of the onions and mushrooms. Add a layer of kale and then fold the dough in half and flatten. Repeat the layering and folding until all the ingredients are incorporated. If the dough starts to crumble, use your fingers to push it back together.

Line a 9-inch round cake pan with plastic wrap and press the dough into the pan, using your palm to spread it over the bottom, lightly applying pressure from the center outward. Place in the freezer for 10 to 15 minutes to firm up. Remove the pan from the freezer and turn upside down on your counter. Lift the pan off the dough and remove the plastic wrap. With a sharp chef’s knife, cut the dough into quarters and then eighths.

In a small bowl, whisk together the small egg and dash of cream to make the egg wash. Place the wedges on a parchment-lined baking sheet, brush with egg wash, and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until golden brown, rotating the pan halfway through to gain an even bake.

Candied Citrus Shortbread

Candied Citrus Shortbread

Makes approx. 4 dozen 2-inch cookies

The buttery golden color and flavor of Khorasan wheat lend themselves well to pastries. These shortbreads are delicious if taken with afternoon tea, but this recipe also doubles as a crust for tarts or pies. You can make endless variations by substituting the sesame seeds with chia and adding a tablespoon of your favorite fresh herb, such as thyme, lavender, or rosemary. If you don't have candied citrus on hand, dried cranberries, sage, and poppy seeds make a delectable alternative.

75 g white kamut flour
35 g whole kamut flour
35 g fine sugar
Pinch of sea salt
85 g cold unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces
40 g candied citrus peel (see this page)
100 g 100% hydration starter
½ Tbsp. black sesame seeds
½ Tbsp. granulated sugar

Preheat your oven to 375°F. In a large bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flours, sugar, and salt. Cut or pulse in the cold butter and candied citrus until pea-sized crumbs form. Add the starter and mix until the dough just comes together. Remove the dough from the bowl and knead on the counter a few strokes until the starter is incorporated and the dough feels smooth. Do not overwork it. Roll into a log and cover with plastic. Alternatively, you may pat it into a disk and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes and up to 3 days.

Remove from the fridge and allow to rest on the counter for a few minutes. Using a sharp knife, slice the log into cookies ¼-inch thick and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. If rolling out the disk, work it to a ¼-inch thickness and use a 1½-inch cutter, rerolling if necessary. Decorate the tops with the sesame seeds and a generous sprinkling of sugar.

Bake for 11 to 13 minutes, until edges are golden, rotating the pan halfway through baking time. These will keep well for 1 week if stored in an airtight container.

Parsley and Herb Doughnuts

Parsley and Herb Doughnuts

Makes 12 doughnuts

In the garden, the tenacity of parsley never fails to surprise me. It is an herb that loves cooler weather and often overwinters in many climates. After the chill of winter lifts, parsley perks up immediately, sending out new tender leaves with the first rays of extended daylight. Its sweet and grassy flavor is a subtle note in these doughnuts, accentuated by whatever other herbs you may have on hand. Mint is a natural choice, but lemon balm works just as well. If you don't have a juicer on hand, don't worry. The parsley juice can be substituted with water or milk, but the doughnuts will be a less vibrant green!

This dough can be baked or fried, although the textures and consistencies will be drastically different. If you bake them, the doughnuts will have a dry, scone-like texture. Fried in peanut or coconut oil or lard, their outer skin browns to a crispy crust that protects a tender, moist crumb. Either way, they are a surprising treat and a perfect way to lure children into eating their greens!

For the Doughnuts:

115 g unsalted butter, softened
45 g fresh parsley
25 g whole fresh mint or lemon balm leaves
50 g granulated sugar
1 large egg
45 g fresh parsley juice
45 g whole milk
145 g 100% hydration starter
360 g all-purpose flour

Pinch of salt

For the Glaze:

30 g fresh orange juice

½ tsp. vanilla extract

90 g powdered sugar

Peanut oil (for frying)

Prepare the Doughnuts: Place the softened butter and herbs into a blender or food processor and blend well, scraping down the sides as needed. Add the sugar, egg, parsley juice, and milk and pulse to combine. Add the starter and pulse to form a slurry. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and salt. Add the parsley slurry to the dry ingredients and mix with your hand until a soft dough comes together. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk ferment for 3 to 4 hours, stretching and folding twice. The dough will sweat and feel puffy when it is ready to be divided, although avoid excessively warm temperatures that encourage butter to leak from the dough.

On a well-floured surface, pat the dough into a 10-inch round about ¾-inch thick. With a doughnut cutter (or two circular cutters 3½ inches and 1 inch wide) cut out the doughnut rounds. Rework the holes and scraps until you have shaped 12 doughnuts. Place on a lined baking sheet and cover with plastic. Retard overnight in the refrigerator, removing 1 hour before you are ready to bake or fry them.

Prepare the Glaze: Put the orange juice and vanilla extract in a small bowl. Sift the powdered sugar over and stir to combine. If any lumps remain, run it through a sieve and return to the bowl.

To Bake the Doughnuts: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Bake the doughnuts for about 20 minutes, until the bottoms are a golden brown, rotating the pan halfway through. Remove from the oven and cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes, then dunk into the glaze.

To Fry the Doughnuts: Heat at least 2 inches of oil in a large cast-iron or heavy-bottomed skillet over high heat until a thermometer reads 375°F,

about 10 minutes. Carefully place no more than 3 doughnuts into the hot oil and cook for 5 to 6 minutes, flipping halfway through. The doughnuts will be a deep golden brown when ready to remove. Drain on a plate lined with a paper towel. Allow to cool for 10 minutes, then dunk into the glaze. Be sure the oil returns to the appropriate temperature before resuming the frying. These are best eaten the day they are made but will store well in an airtight container.

Strawberry and Cardamom Dutch Baby

Strawberry and Cardamom Dutch Baby

Makes one 10-inch pancake

I discovered Dutch babies late in life, sitting at the bar of Ft. Defiance, one of my favorite seats in the house for Sunday brunch after a night of revelry. Expecting a classic pancake to be delivered, my sleepy eyes were surprised instead with an impressive cast-iron pan of billowy deliciousness. This recipe is a cinch to whip up and a great way to satisfy a craving for a fruit-filled brunch without the sugar hangover. Strawberries are used here, but you can substitute any fresh berry or soft fruit such as blackberries, raspberries, peaches, or cooked apples later in the year. Be sure to use room temperature ingredients for a lighter pancake.

3 large eggs
15 g buttermilk
20 g mild honey
125 g 100% hydration starter
¾ tsp. ground cardamom
½ tsp. lemon zest
Pinch of sea salt
115 g chopped fresh strawberries
15 g unsalted butter
15 g powdered sugar

Place a 10-inch cast-iron skillet in the oven and preheat to 475°F.

Beat the eggs in a bowl and add buttermilk, honey, and starter. With a fork, beat until you have a well-mixed batter. If your batter looks like streaky egg drop soup, keep mixing! Add cardamom, zest, and salt and beat until combined. Remove skillet from the oven and add the butter, swirling to

coat. Immediately pour in the batter and quickly top with evenly distributed strawberries. Place back in the oven, lower the temperature to 450°F, and bake for 12 to 15 minutes. Rotate the pan halfway through the baking time. Remove from the oven and transfer to a plate. Dust with powdered sugar and serve immediately.

Strawberry Coffee Cake

Makes one 8½ × 11-inch dish

Growing up in East Tennessee meant unrestricted access to fruit farms loaded with seasonal offerings. When the short window for strawberries opened, we frequented the Jones Strawberry Farm to fill our baskets with as may pick-your-own berries as we could, returning home with stained hands and bloated bellies, ready to make jam. As a teen, I befriended twins who lived on the farm and were part of my local 4-H club. We would spend days running in their fields down by the Clinch River, sampling the gem-like berries and mindlessly harassing nesting killdeer.

My strawberry hunt these days isn't as bucolic, but I have become quite adept at stalking them at the farmer's market. Unfailingly, there are the early shoppers walking their dogs or chefs eager to snatch up the freshest offerings for their menu. By the time I arrive, there is plenty to choose from, but I must be decisive. The crowd swells considerably by 9 A.M., and the red jewels swiftly disappear. The few inexcusably mushed ones that make it home find their way into a cocktail, coffee cake, or compote or are savagely eaten fresh.

Whether you buy or grow your own strawberries, choose the smaller varieties bred for flavor rather than size. By adding a little pink peppercorn, the recipe comes alive with another depth of spicy sweetness. These rosy morsels are not actually related to common black pepper but are the fruit of *Schinus molle*, or the Peruvian peppertree, of the cashew family. With ginger and cinnamon and finished with a hint of rose, this is a fresh dessert with surprising mingling flavors.

For the Crumb Topping:

65 g whole wheat pastry flour
35 g granulated sugar
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
25 g rolled oats
45 g unsalted butter

For the Fruit Topping:
480 g small fresh strawberries, quartered
45 g muscovado (or raw) sugar
1½ tsp. whole pink peppercorns, ground (optional)
½ tsp. ground cinnamon

For the Cake:
125 g whole wheat pastry flour
½ tsp. ground ginger
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
85 g unsalted butter, softened
75 g granulated sugar
1 large egg
110 g honey
85 g whole yogurt
200 g 100% hydration starter

For the Rose Water Whipped Cream:
240 g heavy cream
25 g raw honey
1 tsp. rose water, or to taste (optional)

Prepare the Crumb Topping: In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cinnamon, and oats. Using your fingers, work in the butter until large chunks form and set aside.

Prepare the Fruit Topping: Toss the ingredients together in a small bowl and set aside.

Make the Cake: Preheat your oven to 375°F. Line the bottom of your baking dish with lightly greased parchment paper, leaving a few inches overhanging on two sides. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, spices, baking powder and soda, and salt. In a separate large bowl, beat the butter and sugar together with a hand mixer until pale and fluffy, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the egg, honey, and yogurt and beat until combined. Add the starter and mix with a fork until smooth. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet about a third at a time, being careful not to overmix. Using a spatula, spread the thick batter into your dish, making sure it reaches into the corners.

Spread the fruit topping over the batter, holding back any juice that has collected in the bowl. Sprinkle the crumb topping on top. Bake in the oven for 65 to 70 minutes, rotating halfway through, until a toothpick inserted into the center tests clean. The top should be a rich golden brown when the cake is ready. Let the cake cool completely before cutting to allow the crumb to set.

Prepare the Whipped Cream: While the cake is cooling, prepare the whipped cream. In a chilled bowl, beat together the heavy cream, honey, and rose water. Store in an airtight container until ready to serve over the cake along with more fresh fruit.

Fragaria ‘Lipstick’ (Strawberry)

Honey Rose Cake

Honey Rose Cake

Makes one 9-inch cake

This is a flavorful cake steeped in a rose-flavored syrup reflecting ancient culinary traditions with many variations in Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Jordan, and Egypt, to name just a few. Dust with a hint of powdered sugar and decorate with pistachios and fresh or dried rose petals for an elegant presentation that celebrates the height of the rose season.

Whole kamut flour, a golden hard durum wheat originating from the Fertile Crescent, is used in place of traditional coarse semolina. You may use either, but I prefer the flavor of kamut.

For the Syrup:

120 g water
340 g mild honey
40 g fresh lemon juice (from about 1 lemon)
15 g rose water, or to taste

For the Cake:

170 g whole kamut flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. ground cardamom
½ tsp. sea salt
115 g unsalted butter, softened
100 g granulated sugar
3 large eggs
220 g whole yogurt

20 g mild honey
1 tsp. vanilla extract
150 g 100% hydration starter

For the Garnish:
1 Tbsp. powdered sugar
50 g pistachios, toasted and chopped
A handful of rose petals, washed and dried

Make the Syrup: Combine water and honey in a saucepan and heat until dissolved. Remove from heat and whisk in the lemon juice and rose water. Set aside to cool.

Make the Cake: Preheat your oven to 375°F. Grease and flour a 9-inch cake pan and set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and soda, cardamom, and salt. In a separate large bowl, beat the butter and sugar together with a handheld mixer until pale and fluffy, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the eggs, yogurt, honey, and vanilla and mix until combined. Add the starter and beat in with a fork until the batter is smooth. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet about a third at a time, being careful not to overmix. A few remaining lumps are OK.

Spread the batter into the prepared cake pan and bake for 20 to 22 minutes, until it begins to pull away from the pan. Remove from the oven and, using a toothpick, poke many holes in the top of the cake. Pour the cooled syrup over the cake in 3 or 4 applications, allowing each to soak in before the next. Just before serving, dust with powdered sugar and decorate with the pistachios and petals. This will keep, covered, for several days.

Rosa spp. **(Rose)**

As someone who has cultivated roses professionally, I find it difficult not to sneak them into more than a few late-spring desserts. My favorites to grow and harvest are the single-petaled species and romantic old garden roses, dating as far back as the seventeenth century. They generally

possess the classic strong rose scent and are the first to bloom in the season. Indeed, they are the highlight of this sticky-sweet moist cake.

The most fragrant of the old roses is *Rosa x damascena*, with mysterious origins in the Middle East dating back as far as the thirteenth century. Many customs revolve around the cultivation and use of its oil, including culinary applications.

Mme. George Bruant Rose;
Autumn Damask Rose; Caldwell Pink
Rose; Sweet Frances Rose

Coconut and Lychee Cupcakes

Coconut and Lychee Cupcakes

Makes 10 cupcakes

Litchi chinensis is a tropical and subtropical evergreen tree of the soapberry family and is native to China. Although lychees can be sourced canned, their perfume-like pulp is best eaten fresh. If you are lucky enough to live where lychees grow, use this recipe to honor them in their freshest and most delicate state, alongside coconut—a natural pairing. Garnished with piped frosting and fresh flowers, this is a delicately feminine cupcake with a mildly heady fragrance.

For the Cupcakes:

130 g pastry flour
1 tsp. baking powder
Pinch of sea salt
60 g unsalted butter, softened
30 g coconut sugar
2 eggs
30 g mild honey
½ tsp. vanilla extract
200 g 100% hydration starter
70 g fresh coconut, finely grated
6 fresh lychees, peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped

For the Icing:

170 g cream cheese, softened
85 g powdered sugar
85 g heavy cream
30 g mild honey

15 g rose water (optional)

For the Garnish:
Edible fresh flowers such as rose petals, calendula, or strawberry blossoms (optional)

Make the Cupcakes: Preheat your oven to 375°F and lightly grease your cupcake liners or muffin tin. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. In a separate bowl, with a handheld mixer beat together the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the eggs, honey, and vanilla and beat until thick and combined. Beat in the starter with a fork, then stir in the coconut and lychees. Fill your cups or tin three-quarters full and bake, rotating the pan halfway through, until the tops are golden brown and a toothpick tests clean, 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool.

Make the Icing: Beat together the cream cheese and powdered sugar. In a separate bowl, whip the cream, honey, and rose water (if using) until fluffy. Fold into the sweetened cream cheese and stir until smooth.

Apply icing to your cooled cupcakes and garnish with edible fresh flowers. These are best served the same day.

A Little Something Extra

Spring provides an abundance of fleetingly fresh flavors that can be captured and preserved with a little planning ahead. The following are some pantry staples that will make your sourdough baking truly unique to the seasons for the rest of the year.

Lilac Sugar

Lilac Sugar

Makes 350 g

Lilacs are such a tease. Because they produce next year's flower heads in autumn, one spends all winter watching their tight buds experience the cold dormancy necessary for them to mature and open. When the blossoms finally arrive, their enchanting fragrance is sudden and transitory, leaving only a strong olfactory memory lingering on the nose.

This recipe is an attempt to capture and hold the lilac's essence. Summer fruits are complementary companions to the strong sudsy flavor, but alternative flowers can be substituted here, such as roses or even *Abelia.* Beware of the strength of others such as lavender and adjust quantity accordingly. Lilac sugar will keep indefinitely, perfect for using in other seasons' recipes throughout this book. Plan ahead and be sure to have lilac sugar on hand for Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler (this page) or Candied Citrus Shortbread (this page).

4–5 large lilac panicles (flower clusters)
250 g granulated sugar

Harvest your lilacs on a cool morning before the sun has had a chance to dissipate their fragrant oil. If not using right away, store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 2 days.

Remove the small florets from the panicles. Beginning with the sugar, layer the florets in a lidded glass jar with just enough sugar to coat a layer of lilacs. Continue alternating the sugar and florets until you reach the top of the jar, leaving about ⅓ inch at the top. Store in a cool place, shaking a couple of times a day. After a few days, you will notice the normal process of the sugar pulling the moisture out of the petals, which have now turned a dark color. After 4 to 5 days, the sugar will have a musky floral scent and is ready to spread onto a

plate to dry for 24 to 36 hours. When ready to process, the sugar will feel hard, dry, and clumpy.

Place the lilac sugar in the bowl of a food processor and process until the sugar has reached a fine, powdery texture. It will store well for up to a year and is delicious used as a direct substitute in cakes, pies, or muffins.

Lilac Honey

Makes approximately 450 g

Yet another way to extend the season of this coveted flower, lilac honey is delicious stirred into tea, baked goods, cream sauces, or fruit smoothies. Although it takes a bit of time to strip the small tubular florets from their flower heads, it is worth it for every drop you'll crave the rest of the year. As with the lilac sugar recipe, you can use other flowers or even herbs and spices such as hot pepper, hibiscus, citrus zest, lemon verbena, cinnamon…the combinations are endless! When choosing honey, try to source it raw and local. This type of honey is unpasteurized and contains live enzymes and pollen that most store-bought honeys do not. This is particularly helpful if you are trying to mitigate seasonal allergies. When using dried spices, you may want to gently heat the honey first before pouring into the jar. Do not boil, as this will destroy the fragile properties of the raw honey. Just remember that, with stronger flavors, less is more.

Note: Plan ahead for Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler (this page) by having this lilac honey on hand.

6–7 large lilac panicles

455 g filtered raw mild honey

Remove the small florets from the panicles and put into a 1-pint lidded glass jar.

Pour the honey over the lilac florets, stirring to help the honey settle. Make sure there are no air pockets between the florets. Fill the honey to the top of the jar and seal with the lid. Store on a sunny windowsill for at least 1 week. The flowers will float to the top, so it is a good idea to stir at least once a day to encourage maximum infusion. The flowers may remain in the honey, but you may wish to strain them to avoid their brown disintegrated appearance. Lilac honey will keep well for up to 1 year.

***Syringa* (Lilac)**

Syringa is a diverse genus in the olive family, hailing mostly from Eastern Europe and Asia. Its bloom can extend over almost two months of enjoyment if you have the room to plant several different shrubs. *S. oblata* is one of the first to bloom, rewarding the gardener with russet foliage color in the autumn. These emerge just before the common lilac *S. vulgaris* and its many cultivars, with some prized crosses between the two making up the disease-resistant *x hyacinthiflora* group. The obscure Chinese lilac is next to debut its lax flowers of purple, red, and white, followed by the similar but smaller in stature S. *x persica*, whose finer leaves provide a pleasing texture in the garden. *Syringa x laciniata* is one of my favorite subspecies, whose airy, fine foliage is just as alluring as its pale and strongly scented florets.

Elderflower Cordial

Elderflower Cordial

Makes about 800 grams

Fragrant with notes of citrus and spice, *Sambucus* comes into peak bloom right about the time spring decides to increase daytime temperatures while still maintaining cool nights. There are various species of elderflower that can be found all over North America and Europe, and some beautiful cultivars have made their way into the nursery trade, including those with wine-colored feathery foliage and blushed umbelliferous blooms. These are my favorite to cultivate for this culinary use, as they lend a lovely pink hue to the cordial. If you decide to forage instead, familiarize yourself with your local species, and if harvesting the berries later in the summer for jelly, steer clear of any that have red fruit, as they are not edible. Always remember that you are sharing the hedgerow with other critters who equally appreciate and depend on the flowers, for nectar and pollen.

This delicate cordial is delicious added to simple recipes without competing strong flavors. Whether you add it to a glass of champagne or gooseberry trifle or drizzle it over ice cream or pancakes, you'll find this is a versatile and refreshing addition.

Note: Be sure to plan ahead for Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle (this page) by having this cordial on hand.

22–25 large elderflower umbels (heads)

795 g water

795 g granulated sugar

Zest and juice of 2 lemons

Remove the small florets from the umbels, removing any large stems or insects, and place in a large nonreactive bowl. In a large saucepan, heat the water and sugar until the sugar is completely dissolved. Pour over the elderflower florets and add the lemon zest and juice and stir. Cover with plastic and allow to steep 24 to 36 hours.

Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve and, using a funnel, pour into sterilized bottles or jars. The cordial will keep well for up to

several months if refrigerated. If you wish to keep it for the winter months, you can freeze a portion in an airtight container or Ziploc bag for up to 1 year.

Compound Butters

Compound Butters

Makes 225 grams of butter

These butters are both a delicious concentration of flavors and also a beautiful presentation for the table. Laced with various seasonings and textures, the potential combinations are endless. Below are a few suggestions for butters used in other recipes in this book. Don't let these limit your imagination, as many fresh herbs or flowers would be just as appropriate. Slather these butters on toast, blend into curds, use to prepare eggs, or sauté with vegetables for a quick and appetizing spin on an otherwise predictable meal.

For the Floral Honey Butter:

225 g unsalted butter, softened

40 g Lilac Honey (this page) or other floral-infused honey (such as orange blossom, lavender, or clary sage)

¼ cup plus 1 Tbsp. edible flower petals, washed and dried

In a small bowl, beat together the butter and honey with a large spoon. Fold in all but a few flower petals, reserving some for decoration. Spoon out all the butter onto a piece of parchment or plastic wrap and top with choice petals and small florets. Carefully roll the butter into a log and tuck in the ends of the parchment to cover. Store in the fridge for at least 1 day to allow the flavors to infuse the butter. Keep for up to 1 month in the refrigerator.

For the Chive Blossom and Basil Butter:

225 g unsalted butter, softened

⅓ c. packed fresh basil, finely chopped

3 chive blossoms, florets separated

In small bowl, beat together the basil and butter with a large spoon. Fold in the chive florets. Spoon out the butter onto a piece of parchment or plastic wrap and carefully roll it into a log. Tuck in the ends of the parchment to cover. Store in the fridge for at least 1 day to allow the flavors to infuse the butter. Keep for up to 1 month in the refrigerator.

For the Chili Citrus Butter:

1 small whole chili (chipotle, guajillo, pasilla, pulla, and ancho work well, each with a different flavor and level of spiciness)

225 g unsalted butter, softened

1½ Tbsp. grapefruit zest

In a coffee or spice grinder, process the chili into a fine powder. In a small bowl, beat the butter together with 1½ Tbsp. of the chili powder and all of the grapefruit zest. Spoon out the butter onto a piece of parchment or plastic wrap and carefully roll it into a log. Tuck in the ends of the parchment to cover. Store in the fridge for at least 1 day to allow the flavors to infuse the butter. Keep for up to 1 month in the refrigerator.

8 | Summer Sun Worship

BREADS

LE PAIN DU SOLEIL

BLUE CORN AND CARAMELIZED ONION LOAF

SAFFRON BUNS

SAVORY ZUCCHINI AND GREEN OLIVE LOAF

SAVORIES

JALAPEÑO CHEESE BREAD

TOMATO AND LEBANY GALETTE

APRICOT AND TARRAGON SCONES

SAVORY FIG CROSTATA

TOMATO AND BASIL MINI MUFFINS

PARCHMENT CRACKERS

SCARLET RUNNER BEAN HUMMUS

CORN AND ZUCCHINI GRIDDLE CAKES WITH SWEET CHILI SAUCE

SWEETS

SOLSTICE PIE WITH BUCKWHEAT CRUST

GOOSEBERRY AND ELDERFLOWER TRIFLE

PLUM AND AMARANTH MUFFINS

GERANIUM-SCENTED CAKE

LILAC-INFUSED BLUEBERRY COBBLER

CHOCOLATE CHERRY HAND-PIES

CHOCOLATE BLACKBERRY SPROUTED QUINOA CAKE

PEACH AND LAVENDER CRUMB MUFFINS

FENNEL, ORANGE, AND ALMOND BISCOTTI

LAHMACUN

RASPBERRY TEQUILA LIME TARTLETS

WE DEPEND ON THE SUN FOR LIFE AND SUSTENANCE, AND ITS DEIFICATION IS NO MORE PALPABLE THAN IN THE FESTIVITIES OF THE SUMMER SOLSTICE. PROVIDING POWER, ENERGY, LIFE, AND WARMTH, THE SUMMER'S LIGHT IS AGGRESSIVE AND intense. Breezy dresses, elderflower-laced cocktails, laughter at dusk from a blanket while fireflies dance under the trees…these are the activities celebrated under the spell of luminosity. Likewise, kitchen whimsy is fueled by a desire to socialize in the warm air that signals a time for unrestrictive adornments and freedom of movement. It is a return to restorative gatherings and a strengthening of spirit.

The ripening power of late June's rays means I can barely keep up with the onslaught of freshness spilling forth from the garden. July is plentiful, its offerings giving way to fruit-laden desserts whose bright flavors are ample distraction from mosquito-bitten legs and sunburned shoulders. Natural flavors warmed by the sun are reason enough to assemble a pie and no more of an excuse is needed to gather friends than slow-roasted pork lovingly crowded between saffron-scented buns. As August descends, freckles on the skin have spread into one bronzed glow, and today's zucchini grows large on the vine, neglected as yesterday's harvest is grated into batter.

Summer recipes have the advantage of starting with produce that is already ornamental in its own right: blushing apricots, blackberries fit for a raven's hoard, peaches so ripe they bruise with the lightest squeeze. There's really no way you can fail to produce something both appetizing and beautiful for the table.

Most of these summer recipes accommodate a menu requiring little time in the kitchen. I am wary about keeping the stove lit for too long, as there is no need to compete with rising outside temperatures. Utilizing the grill or nothing at all to make the rest of the meal is my preferred strategy, often simply adorning a crusty slice of bread with prosciutto to accompany a hearty salad or quickly sautéed greens.

As September approaches, one becomes aware of the impending expiration of long days, lazy afternoon picnics, and long ocean swims. Summer's aggressive light wanes and influences crisp mornings and cool evenings instead. One scurries to pickle the last of the green beans as the fading humidity makes standing by the stove a little more tolerable. As quickly as we commemorated our reunion with the earth and the growing season, memories of June recede.

Le Pain du Soleil

Le Pain du Soleil

Makes 2 loaves

Helianthus annuus is one of the cheeriest flowers you can grow, with its heliotropic buds that are the definitive symbol of sun worship. Facing east in the morning, their flexible necks will follow the direction of the sun, ending with a salute to the west at sundown and returning to the east by morning. Their ripe seeds are a nutritious food for birds, and they are excellent added to breads containing other nutty or hearty grains. Used here with corn and rye, they make a spirited bread that is shaped into a classic French couronne (crown). With a high percentage of leaven and whole grains, this bread does not retard well and can be baked the same day if mixed on a warm morning.

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

85 g water

85 g bread flour

For the Soaker:

200 g boiling water

100 g cornmeal

For the Dough:

200 g leaven

550 g water

Soaker (see left)

400 g bread flour

300 g medium rye flour

200 g high-extraction wheat flour
18 g salt

Fold-ins:
150 g sunflower seeds, toasted
30 g black sesame seeds

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and stir with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Make the Soaker: In a separate medium bowl, pour the boiling water over the cornmeal and stir to make a paste. Cover with plastic and allow to sit at room temperature until ready to mix the dough.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is bubbly and active, stir in the water and corn soaker to form a slurry. Add the flours and mix until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Fold in the sunflower and sesame seeds and allow to bulk proof for 3 hours, turning and folding every 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, turn out onto a lightly floured surface and preshape into two equal balls, seam-side down. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 20 to 30 minutes before final shaping. Place your thumb in the middle of the ball, creating a small hole. Using one hand to rotate the ball, widen the hole using the thumb and forefinger of your other hand. Stretch until the hole is 2½ to 3 inches wide. Repeat with the other ball of dough. Place on a floured couche, cover with a towel and plastic, and refrigerate for 4 to 6 hours, until puffy and expanded. This dough does not favor long fermentation.

Bake according to the instructions on this page.

Blue Corn and Caramelized Onion Loaf

Blue Corn and Caramelized Onion Loaf

Makes 2 loaves or 4 epis

Anson Mills in South Carolina grows and mills an impressive selection of distinct specialty and heirloom grains. You can request their Native Fine Blue Masa Flour without culinary lime, which is normally added for making tortillas. This flour lends a lavender-gray hue to the crumb, and a rich mineral and sweet corn flavor.

Fold-in:

25 g extra-virgin olive oil

120 g onions, chopped

For the Leaven:

40 g 100% hydration starter

40 g water

40 g bread flour

For the Dough:

120 g leaven

585 g water

395 g bread flour

160 g high-extraction wheat flour

80 g whole wheat flour

160 g fine blue corn flour

16 g sea salt

Caramelize the Onions: Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté over medium-low, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Cook until they are richly brown, about 25 to 30 minutes. This can

be done up to a day in advance. Set aside to cool or store covered in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover with plastic and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: When your leaven is bubbly and active, add the water and stir to combine. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the onions and stir to combine. Fold the caramelized onions into the dough until evenly distributed. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours. This is a very active dough that tends to bulk rise quickly, so keep an eye on it to prevent overproofing.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, turn out onto a lightly floured surface and divide into 2 pieces if making batards or 4 equal pieces if making epis. Preshape into batards and cover with plastic. Bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes. If making regular batards, shape accordingly. Otherwise, pat the preshaped batards out and final shape into tight, long batards. Using both hands, roll into long baguette forms, careful not to exceed the length of your baking stone. Place onto a couche and cover with a towel and plastic and refrigerate for no more than 8 hours. When ready to bake, place a piece of parchment onto a peel or baking sheet and dust with cornmeal. Position the baguettes on the parchment with plenty of space between, preparing to perform two bakes if necessary. Work to create an epi shape: Using your scissors, make 6 to 7 equally spaced, V-shaped cuts along the top of the baguette, taking care not to separate each piece completely. Fold cuts to alternating sides. (See this page.)

Bake using the hearth method according to instructions on this page.

Saffron Buns

Saffron Buns

Makes 12 buns

This highly enriched dough with eggs, floral honey butter, and milk has a beautifully tender and golden crumb enhanced by the stigmas (female reproductive organs) harvested from the flower of the minor garden bulb *Crocus sativus.* Stuff it with cocoa-spiced pork (see this page) or braised oxtail (see this page) and you have the perfect reason to celebrate fertility…or just to throw a barbecue.

For the Leaven:

60 g 100% hydration starter
110 g water
110 g bread flour

For the Dough:

165 g whole milk
Generous pinch of saffron
280 g leaven
110 g water
1 large egg, beaten
3 egg yolks, beaten
80 g floral honey butter (this page), softened
105 g honey
35 g granulated sugar
615 g bread flour
70 g whole wheat flour
14 g salt

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the starter and water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover with plastic and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Build the Dough: While the leaven is maturing, prepare the saffron milk. Combine the milk and saffron threads in a small saucepan. Stir over low heat until the milk takes on a golden color, about 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat place in the refrigerator until ready to use.

When the leaven is bubbly and active, stir in the saffron milk, water, egg, egg yolks, butter, honey, and sugar. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Remove the dough from the bowl and knead on the counter for 7 to 8 minutes. Clean the bowl and oil it, then return the dough to the bowl. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 4 to 5 more hours, turning and folding once per hour.

Shape the Buns: When the dough is puffy and at least doubled in size, turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide into 12 roughly 110 g pieces and preshape into balls. Cover and allow to rest for 10 to 30 minutes then final shape into tighter balls: Cupping your hand over the dough, loosely roll the balls clockwise in the palm of your hand against the counter surface. Do this until the dough becomes a uniform ball with no obvious seams in the surface. Place onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Cover with a cloth and then plastic and allow to proof for another 1 to 2 hours. Alternatively, you may retard in the fridge for 6 to 8 hours, but they will take on a considerably stronger acidity that may be off-putting.

Preheat your oven to 450°F. Score the buns and bake on a hearthstone with steam for 18 to 22 minutes, until the tops are a golden brown. Cool on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Savory Zucchini and Green Olive Loaf

Savory Zucchini and Green Olive Loaf

Makes 2 mini loaves

Zucchini is one of the most generous squashes you can grow, often producing yields that allow you to forge innumerable friendships by gifting it to neighbors and colleagues. This recipe uses just one small zucchini but can easily be doubled to make more. A nontraditional spin on the more predictable sweet zucchini bread, this loaf is full of fresh and savory flavors.

185 g whole wheat pastry flour
1½ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. sea salt
45 g extra-virgin olive oil
2 eggs
200 g 100% hydration starter
125 g zucchini (about one small zucchini), grated
80 g green olives, pitted and coarsely chopped
80 g goat cheese or Feta, crumbled
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh herbs (basil, chives, marjoram, or thyme works well)

Preheat your oven to 375°F. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. In a separate large bowl, beat together the oil and eggs until thick ribbons fall from a spoon. Beat in the starter with a fork. Stir in the zucchini, olives, cheese, and herbs. Gently fold in the dry ingredients, a few batches at a time, being careful not to overmix. A few remaining lumps are OK.

Fill your tins and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until golden brown and a toothpick tests clean. Cool on a wire rack. This bread keeps well for several days if stored in an airtight container.

Jalapeño Cheese Bread

Jalapeño Cheese Bread

Makes 2 large loaves

The ingredients in this bread blend beautifully with the flavor profile of sourdough. The flour choices may seem complicated, but the end result is well worth the hunt for these ingredients. Adding boiling water to the corn before mixing it into the dough is an important step that pre-gelatinizes the starches in the corn. Jalapeños are my favorite, but you may choose any other hot pepper, such as habaneros or aji. If you have sensitive skin, consider wearing gloves when preparing the jalapeños for this recipe. This bread makes excellent toast or a decadent BLT sandwich!

For the Leaven:

30 g 100% hydration starter

45 g water

45 g bread flour

For the Soaker:

55 g medium cornmeal

150 g boiling water

For the Dough:

120 g leaven

280 g water

½ tsp. sriracha sauce

Soaker (see left)

65 g coarse semolina flour

65 g whole wheat flour

415 g bread flour

12 g salt

Fold-ins:

6 medium jalapeños

170 g Cheddar, cut into ¼-inch chunks

Build the Leaven: Eight to ten hours before you are to make the dough, build your leaven. In a large bowl, stir together the water to form a slurry. Add the flour and mix with a spoon until smooth. Cover and allow to ferment at room temperature.

Roast the Jalapeños: There are several methods of charring the jalapeños. The easiest is to place them under the broiler until the skins are blackened and peel away from the flesh. You may also spear them with a fork and roast over the open flame of your gas stove. My favorite is to place them on an outdoor grill until the skins are fragrant and dark. When blackened all over, peel the jalapeños and remove the seeds, discarding both. Refrigerate until ready to mix into the dough.

Make the Soaker: Boil 150 g of water and add to the cornmeal in a medium bowl. Stir until the cornmeal is thoroughly hydrated, cover with plastic, and allow to cool. Keep at room temperature until ready to build the dough.

Build the Dough: When the leaven is puffy and active, add the water, sriracha, and soaker to the leaven and stir to combine. Add the flours and mix with your hand until hydrated and no lumps remain. The dough will feel slack and somewhat sticky. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt over the dough and mix to completely incorporate. Break the roasted jalapeños into large chunks. Fold in the roasted jalapeños and cheese and mix until evenly distributed. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk proof for 3 to 4 hours, turning and folding every 30 to 45 minutes.

Shape the Dough: When the dough is puffy and active, divide in half and preshape. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes

then form into the final shape of your preference. Place seam-side up in a floured banneton or couche. Cover with a towel and then plastic and refrigerate for 8 to 16 hours.

Bake according to the instructions on this page. If you choose to bake on a hearthstone, do so on parchment paper for easy cleanup of oozy cheese drips. Once the crust is a deep golden brown, remove from the oven, but be careful: molten cheese is very damaging to bare skin!

Tomato and Lebany Galette

Tomato and Lebany Galette

Makes approximately one 10-inch galette

Summer’s bounty sometimes puts us in a frenzy of consumption, and tomatoes are no exception. I am often caught eating a fresh tomato sandwich over the sink, juice dripping down my chin, when I think no one is looking. If company is around, I prefer the more civilized presentation of this beautifully rustic and easy galette. Lebany is a yogurt cheese that may be purchased at specialty groceries or Middle Eastern stores but is just as easy to make at home. Dress with a drizzle of your best olive oil, a generous pinch of salt, and fresh herbs before serving.

For the Garlic Lebany:

230 g whole yogurt

2 garlic cloves, chopped

1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh herbs, such as oregano, rosemary, or chives (optional)

For the Walnut Pâte Brisée:

45 g walnuts

45 g whole wheat pastry flour

65 g all-purpose flour

15 g granulated sugar

½ tsp. sea salt

½ Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary

75 g unsalted butter

50 g 100% hydration starter

15–25 g vodka or water, ice cold

For the Egg Wash:

1 large egg yolk

Dash of cream

24–26 cherry tomatoes, sliced into thin rounds

For the Topping:

1 Tbsp. chopped fresh herbs, such as oregano, rosemary, or chives, for garnish

A generous pinch of flaked sea salt

Make the Lebany: At least a day in advance, line the top of a container with cheesecloth and secure with a rubber band, allowing the cloth to form a cradle. Spoon the yogurt onto the cheesecloth, cover, and let drain overnight in the refrigerator. The whey will collect in the container and you will be left with a thick, cheese-like yogurt at the top. Finely chop the garlic and mix with the yogurt cheese. You can add finely chopped herbs if you like as well.

Prepare the Crust: In a food processor, pulse together the walnuts, flour, sugar, salt, and rosemary until the whole walnuts are ground fine. Add the butter and pulse until the texture resembles cornmeal. Add the starter and water or vodka and pulse to combine. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead once or twice until the dough comes together. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to one day.

Assemble the Galette: Remove the dough from the fridge and allow to soften at room temperature, about 5 to 10 minutes. Preheat your oven to 400°F. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough using quarter turns until it is ¼ inch thick, using a dough scraper to assist. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Spread the lebany to within 1–2 inches of the crust edge. Arrange the sliced tomatoes on top of the lebany. Working in a clockwise direction, fold over the crust edges toward the center, overlapping at about 4-inch intervals and leaving about 7–8 inches uncovered in the center. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream and brush on top of the crust.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through baking, until the crust is golden brown. Top with freshly chopped herbs and a generous pinch of flaked sea salt. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Apricot and Tarragon Scones

Apricot and Tarragon Scones

Makes almost 2 dozen 1½-inch scones

Two of the greatest pleasures of summer are fresh stone fruits and herbs. Regardless of your gardening space (or lack thereof), herbs can easily be grown on a sunny windowsill or fire escape. Thriving on neglect and often tolerant of hot and dry conditions, herbs are plants anyone can grow. Combined with the freshest fruit or berries, herbs add another subtle seasonal dimension to the kitchen.

Most people are accustomed to using tarragon in savory dishes, but it can just as easily make its way into sweets. The flavor somewhat resembles anise or fennel but has a deeper pungent flavor with its own intriguing earthy character. Kamut flour rounds out the buttery richness of these scones but tends to be a very thirsty flour. If you need to substitute for it, be conservative with the buttermilk, adding only enough to help the dough come together.

90 g whole kamut flour
90 g white kamut flour
1¼ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
60 g granulated sugar
115 g cold unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces
1½ Tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon
1 tsp. orange zest
200 g 100% hydration starter
55 g buttermilk
3–4 small fresh apricots, chopped

For the Egg Wash (Optional):

1 large egg yolk

Dash of cream

Preheat your oven to 375°F. In a large bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flours, baking powder and soda, salt, and sugar. Cut or pulse in the butter pieces until coarse crumbs form. Add the tarragon and orange zest and mix until roughly incorporated. Add the starter and buttermilk and stir or pulse just until the dough comes together. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and gently fold in the apricot chunks. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until firm or up to several hours. Alternatively, freeze for up to 2 weeks.

Place the dough on a lightly floured surface and pat into a ¾- to 1-inch disk. Lightly flour a small cutter and cut out as many scones as you can, reworking the dough as necessary. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream to make an egg wash, if desired. Brush onto the tops of the scones.

Bake for 12 to 13 minutes, until a nice golden color flushes the tops. Serve warm or at room temperature the same day.

Savory Fig Crostata

Savory Fig Crostata

Makes 4 small crostatas

Each immigrant population that has settled in Brooklyn has brought with it a rich variety of produce and garden plants, including the coveted fig. The genus *Ficus* contains over a thousand species from all over the world, but the coveted, edible common fig, *Ficus carica*, hails specifically from the Middle East and Mediterranean Basin. Many Brooklyn backyard plots have one of these marginally hardy small trees with large, aggressive root systems that are laden with plump fruit come September. I am often gifted copious amounts, which I've happily put to use in everything from ice cream to these tasty personal-sized crostatas. Use a semi-firm bleu cheese that easily crumbles, such as Roquefort or Maytag.

Walnut Pâte Brisée (see this page)

For the Egg Wash:
1 large egg yolk
Dash of cream

For the Filling:
30 g extra-virgin olive oil
240 g onions, chopped
Pinch of sea salt
20 g port wine
70 g whole-milk ricotta
8 fresh figs, cut into quarters
60 g semi-firm bleu cheese

For the Garnish:

1 Tbsp. chopped fresh herbs, such as rosemary, parsley, or thyme

Prepare the walnut pâte brisée. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day. Alternatively, you may store it for up to 2 weeks in the freezer.

Heat the oil over medium heat and add the onions and salt. Sauté for 25 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. When onions are a rich brown color, add the port wine and let simmer for 1 minute. Set aside.

Preheat your oven to 375°F. Remove the dough from the fridge and allow to soften at room temperature, about 5 minutes. Divide the dough into 4 pieces and roll out on a lightly floured surface to ¼-inch thickness. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Spread a thin layer of ricotta to within ½ inch of the edge of each. Top each with 1½ Tbsp. of the caramelized onions and then layer on 8 pieces of fig. Crumble the bleu cheese over the top. Working in a clockwise direction, fold over the crust edges toward the center, overlapping at about 2-inch intervals, and leaving about 3 inches uncovered in the center.

In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream to make an egg wash. Brush onto the edges of the crostatas.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until the crust is golden. Sprinkle with freshly chopped herbs and serve warm or at room temperature.

Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins

Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins

Makes approximately 32 two-inch muffins

These little savory bites will be the hit of your next summer gathering. Make the muffins with tomatoes and basil at their peak of freshness, split them open, and wedge a piece of salty ham in between for a hearty two-bite appetizer.

100 g whole wheat pastry flour
110 g all-purpose flour
70 g cornmeal
1½ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
60 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled
2 large eggs
200 g whole milk
200 g 100% hydration starter
15 g honey
50 g grated Parmesan or Asiago
16 small cherry tomatoes, chopped
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
1 garlic clove, minced

Preheat your oven to 375°F. Generously grease a mini muffin pan and set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, cornmeal, baking powder and soda, and salt. In a separate large bowl, beat together the butter, eggs, and milk until well combined. Add the starter and honey and mix with a fork. Add the flour mixture into the wet mixture in thirds, stirring between each addition, being careful not to overmix. Add the Parmesan, chopped

tomatoes, basil, and garlic and stir to combine. Spoon the batter into the muffin pan.

Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until golden. Remove the muffins from the pan and cool on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to several days.

Parchment Crackers

Parchment Crackers

Makes 8 to 10 large crackers

The inspiration for these beautiful crackers came from a basic recipe that has developed across various cultures. Carta musica, named to conjure images of ancient sheet music, is this recipe's closest cousin. Chopped herbs and garlic-infused olive oil add depth to the characteristic semolina flour. Perfect for entertaining, the crackers' organic shape is meant for breaking apart and dipping, perhaps into a garlicky Scarlet Runner Bean Hummus (this page).

For the Infused Olive Oil:

50 g extra-virgin olive oil

3 garlic cloves, sliced

1 Tbsp. orange zest

1 sprig each of fresh rosemary, thyme, sage, and marjoram

½ tsp. red pepper flakes

For the Dough:

Infused olive oil (see left)

45 g water

215 g 100% hydration starter

65 g bread flour

180 g coarse semolina flour

½ tsp. sea salt, plus more for topping

1 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary (optional)

Infuse the Oil: Heat the oil in a saucepan just until warm. Turn off the heat and add the garlic, orange zest, sprigs of herbs, and red pepper flakes. Cover and allow to steep for at least 24 hours, or store in a sterilized glass

jar for up to one week and strain through a fine-mesh sieve when ready to use.

Prepare the Crackers: Combine the strained oil, water, and starter in a medium bowl and mix to a slurry. Add the flours and salt and rosemary (if using) and knead until combined. The dough will be stiff. Cover with plastic and allow to rest at room temperature for 30 to 60 minutes or up to 1 day in the refrigerator.

Preheat your oven to 500°F with a hearthstone positioned on the middle rack. Divide the dough into 8 to 10 balls and cover with plastic while you work.

Flatten one ball with your palm on a lightly floured work surface. Using a rolling pin, roll out until transparently thin. The cracker dough is surprisingly elastic and amenable, but take care *not* to be too precise with your rolling. The more irregular the shape, the more interesting the cracker! As a rough guide, however, the dough should measure approximately 6 × 5 inches. Place the rolled sheets of dough under plastic as you go, and work until you have 2 to 3 done.

Bake the Crackers: Carefully lay the thin sheets on the preheated hearthstone. Bake for 2 minutes on each side, or until the bubbles and edges are golden brown. Continue to roll the rest of the crackers while the first ones bake. Cool on a wire rack and store in a paper bag for up to 1 week.

Scarlet Runner Bean Hummus

Makes about 1¼ cups

When ready to harvest in late summer, the plump shelled beans of the scarlet runner sport an astonishing palette. Dark purple to violet, they barely hold their color after being cooked but provide an earthy flavor, somewhat like fava beans. In fact, fresh favas may be substituted in this recipe in the spring. Just make sure to peel away their skins after boiling.

120 g shelled fresh scarlet runner beans or fava beans
230 g water
1 garlic clove
40–50 g extra-virgin olive oil
25 g tahini
60 g fresh orange juice
½ Tbsp. ground cumin
½ tsp. red pepper flakes
¼ tsp. sea salt

Chopped fresh herbs, such as basil, mint, chives, or parsley, for garnish

Place the shelled beans and water in a heavy saucepan and cook for about 25 minutes, until tender to a fork. Drain and set aside. Place the garlic and 2 tablespoons of oil in the food processor and pulse until chopped fine.

Add the cooked beans and the remaining ingredients and process until you reach your desired texture, adding more oil if desired. Serve garnished with fresh herbs.

***Phaseolus coccineus* (Scarlet runner bean)**

Phaseolus coccineus is an annual, beautifully ornamental vine in the legume family that provides an abundance of long and meaty edible green pods. The trifoliate leaves have the coarse texture of a regular runner bean in the early part of the season, but the flowers are a welcome surprise when the garden is otherwise looking tired and heat stressed. This vine announces its presence in late August with red-orange blooms that hummingbirds regularly visit on their migration south.

Corn and Zucchini Griddle Cakes with Sweet Chili Sauce

Corn and Zucchini Griddle Cakes with Sweet Chili Sauce

Makes six approximately 4-inch pancakes

These fresh griddle cakes are perfect brunch fare when topped with sautéed greens and sunny-side-up eggs, with a crisp glass of dry white wine, naturally. At the height of summer, nothing comes close to the corn's natural sweetness when paired with the Thai-inspired chili sauce in this recipe.

For the Sauce:

50 g coconut oil
60 g shallots, finely chopped
1 Tbsp. minced jalapeño
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp. tamarind paste
15–20 g water
55 g rice vinegar
50 g fish sauce
50 g granulated sugar
1½-inch piece fresh ginger, grated
1–2 Tbsp. ground dried chili, to taste
25 g fresh lime juice

For the Griddle Cakes:

2 ears of corn, husks on
50 g onion, chopped
1½ tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced

50 g zucchini, julienned into 2-inch strips
15 g minced red bell pepper
½ Tbsp. minced jalapeño
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
1 tsp. ground cumin
½ tsp. sea salt
½ tsp. baking soda
1 large egg, beaten
50 g 100% hydration starter
50 g whole wheat flour
50 g Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese, grated

Make the Sweet Chili Sauce: In a small saucepan, heat the oil over medium flame until hot. Fry the shallots for about 3 to 4 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium-low and stir in the jalapeño and garlic. Cook for an additional 1 to 2 minutes until fragrant. Transfer the contents of the pan into a mortar, add the rest of the ingredients, and pound with a pestle. Return the mixture to the pan and simmer, stirring frequently, until it has reduced and thickened, about 10 more minutes. Keep in a lidded jar in the refrigerator and heat just before serving, adjusting the consistency with a little more vinegar if needed. Keeps well for several months.

Make the Griddle Cakes: Place the ears of corn over the medium flame of a preheated grill and roast for 10 to 12 minutes, turning to attain even cooking. Remove and allow to cool. (Alternatively, you may use raw corn kernels, but grilled imparts a better flavor.) Peel away the husks and silks. Cut the kernels from the cob using a sharp knife and place in a medium bowl. In a heavy skillet over medium-low heat, sauté the onion with 1 tsp. of the oil until softened, about 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Transfer to the bowl of corn and add the zucchini, red pepper, jalapeño, chives, cumin, salt, and baking soda and stir to combine. Add the egg and mix. With a fork incorporate the starter into the corn mixture, making sure it is evenly distributed. Sprinkle in the flour and cheese and stir until combined.

Add the remaining ½ tsp. of oil to the same skillet you used for the onions and heat over medium-high for 3 to 4 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium-low and drop the corn batter into the skillet, spreading with the back of a spoon to make a small cake. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes on both sides or until a rich golden brown. Continue to cook griddle cakes with the remaining batter. Serve with a generous portion of warmed chili sauce.

Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust

Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust

Makes one 9-inch pie

Sometimes the birds are more industrious at harvesting than I am. They snatch up the ripest berries before I have a chance to contemplate their fate in a summer dessert. This recipe is flexible for using up whatever handfuls are available to commemorate the solstice, but black currants are a must to accompany the earthy buckwheat crust. In New York, the summer solstice arrives just as the gooseberries and currants begin to ripen and the *Amelanchier* trees are shaking with avian activity. Sour cherries aren't far behind the last berries of the strawberry cycle, and they all come together in one simple pie.

For the Crust:

225 g buckwheat flour

45 g granulated sugar

½ tsp. salt

115 g unsalted butter

100 g 100% hydration starter

2 egg yolks

20 g ice-cold water or vodka

For the Egg Wash:

1 large egg yolk

Dash of cream

For the Fruit Filling:

115 g fresh black currants

60 g fresh red currants

150 g granulated sugar
Pinch of sea salt
75 g fresh white currants or gooseberries
200 g fresh strawberries
100 g *Amelanchier* berries or fresh blueberries
150 g fresh sour cherries, pitted
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
40 g buckwheat honey
1 tsp. vanilla extract
25 g arrowroot powder

For the Topping:
Generous sprinkling of coarse sugar

Prepare the Crust: Whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl or pulse in a food processor. Cut or pulse in the butter until the texture resembles cornmeal. Add the starter, egg yolks, and water and pulse or stir to combine. Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead once or twice until it comes together. Divide in half and form into two balls, one slightly larger than the other. Wrap each in plastic and refrigerate at least 30 minutes and up to 12 hours.

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Remove the larger dough ball from the fridge and allow to soften at room temperature, 5 to 10 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll the crust into a circle about ⅛ inch thick. Lightly roll the crust around your rolling pin and transfer to your pie plate. Gently press into the bottom and sides of the pan and prick with a fork. Blind bake the crust for 15 minutes, then remove from the oven and allow to cool. Whisk together the egg and dash of cream to make an egg wash. Brush the entire crust with some of the egg wash to prevent it from becoming soggy when the pie is baked.

Make the Filling: Combine the black and red currants in a small saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat until the berries begin to release their juices, about 5 minutes. Add the sugar and salt and cook until the mixture begins to

thicken, about 12 to 15 more minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the rest of the fruit and the cinnamon, honey, and vanilla extract. Sift the arrowroot over the top and stir to combine.

Assemble the Pie: Remove the second dough ball from the refrigerator and allow to soften at room temperature, about 5 to 10 minutes. Roll into a slightly smaller circle. Fill the prebaked pie shell with the fruit mixture and top the pie with the remaining crust, decorating as you wish. This crust is easy to handle and will lend itself well to decorative flourishes. Brush with more egg wash and top with coarse sugar.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until the crust shows a deep brown flush around the edges. Let cool completely and serve with whipped cream.

Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle

Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle

Makes 4 small servings

There are well over one hundred different species belonging to the *Ribes* genus. The ones most familiar to us are currants and gooseberries. Although gaining in popularity, gooseberries are still underused in desserts. They are deliciously acidic with a tart, floral flavor, especially when served with heady elderflower cordial. There are species of gooseberries with fruit of various colors—yellow, green, or red—according to cultivar. This dessert is quite sweet and cooling when served on a July afternoon.

For the Gooseberry Puree:

240 g fresh gooseberries, tips cleaned
175 g water
15 g fresh lemon juice
75 g granulated sugar
25 g Elderflower Cordial (this page)

For the Cake:

50 g granulated sugar
1½ tsp. lemon zest
2 large eggs
Pinch of sea salt
½ tsp. vanilla extract
50 g 100% hydration starter
30 g pastry flour

For the Cream:

3 egg yolks

40 g granulated sugar
170 g whole milk
115 g heavy cream

For the Garnish (Optional):
120 g Elderflower Cordial (this page)
Edible fresh flowers such as rose, mallow, or pansy
Fresh mint leaves

Make the Puree: Put the gooseberries, water, and lemon juice into a saucepan and cook over medium-low heat until they soften, about 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the sugar and cook over low for 10 minutes, careful to avoid boiling. Once the sugar has dissolved, raise the temperature just a bit and bring to a gentle boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture slightly thickens, 20 to 25 more minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let cool. Stir in the elderflower cordial.

Bake the Cake: Preheat your oven to 375°F. Line a 5 × 8-inch cake tin with a piece of parchment paper and lightly grease and flour the parchment. Mash the sugar and lemon zest with a mortar and pestle to release the citrus oils and transfer to a medium bowl. Add the eggs and salt and beat with a handheld mixer on high until the mixture becomes pale and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the vanilla extract and starter and mix with a fork to combine. Sprinkle the flour over the wet ingredients and stir lightly to combine, careful not to lose the air. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the cake tests clean. Remove and cool on a wire rack. It will be thin and slightly spongy.

Prepare the Cream: In a small bowl, beat the egg yolks and sugar together with a handheld mixer until creamy and pale. In a heavy saucepan, heat the milk until just under boiling. Slowly add the milk to the egg mixture, whisking vigorously. Return the mixture to the pan and heat on low, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens enough to cover the spoon. You'll know it is ready when a finger raked across the back of the spoon leaves a clean line. Immediately remove from the heat and strain the mixture

through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl to cool. In a separate medium bowl, beat the heavy cream until it thickens. Fold into the cooled curd. You may prepare this up to several days in advance of assembling the trifle. Keep covered in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Assemble the Trifle: Cut or tear the cake into small pieces and arrange in a layer in 4 small glasses. Drizzle with elderflower cordial, then layer on gooseberry puree. Place generous dollops of the cream, then repeat the layers. Garnish with fresh flowers or mint and serve immediately.

Plum and Amaranth Muffins

Plum and Amaranth Muffins

Makes 12 muffins

These muffins are packed with fruit and just enough whole-grain flour to justify having one more for breakfast. The thirsty kamut flour thickens the batter and holds the fruit well, without letting it sink to the bottom. Sprinkle a coarse sugar over the top before baking, or serve dusted with powdered sugar for a little extra flourish.

Mahlab is a spice made from the interior of the seeds of a Mediterranean sour cherry and has been used for centuries in Middle Eastern cooking. It has a distinctive floral aroma that embodies the perfect union of fruit and almonds. Only a small amount is needed for great effect, escalating this simple muffin to great heights. If you can't source mahlab from your favorite spice carrier, ½ tsp. almond extract will suffice.

100 g white kamut flour
100 g whole kamut flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¾ tsp. ground mahlab
2 large eggs
70 g maple sugar
50 g maple syrup
127 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled
100 g Greek yogurt
100 g 100% hydration starter
25 g whole amaranth grain

150 g red or purple plums, coarsely chopped (about 2 medium plums)
25 g sliced almonds
Coarse sugar (optional)

Preheat your oven to 375°F. Line your muffin tin with well-greased paper cups or your liner of choice.

In a medium bowl, combine the flours, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and mahlab and set aside. In a separate large bowl, beat together the eggs and maple sugar with a handheld mixer until fluffy. Add the maple syrup, butter, and yogurt and mix until combined. Incorporate the starter with a fork, making sure no streaks remain. Add the dry ingredients in batches, stirring between each addition, being careful not to overmix. Fold in 15 g of the amaranth and the plums. Distribute the batter among the muffin cups, filling to about three-quarters full. Top with the remaining 10 g amaranth and the sliced almonds and sprinkle with coarse sugar if desired.

Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until the almonds are golden and a toothpick tests clean. These are delicious served immediately, but they set well after cooled and will keep for a couple of days stored in an airtight container.

Geranium-Scented Cake

Geranium-Scented Cake

Makes one 5 × 9-inch loaf

Despite their confusing common name, scented geraniums are unrelated to the true *Geranium* genus and are instead defined botanically as *Pelargonium.* The showy window-box hybrids commonly found in most garden centers are not to be confused with their less familiar species including *P. capitatum* (rose-scented), *P. fragrans* (nutmeg-scented), *P. tomentosum* (peppermint-scented) or *P. crispum* (lemon-scented). These drought- and heat-tolerant species display pale pink flowers in summer, topping lobed, coarse green leaves that emit a resinous scent when crushed. They are tender but will tolerate being placed in a sunny window to ride out the winter months. They are a delight to cultivate and can be used to flavor baked goods, sachets, or iced tea.

The flavors in this moist cake are versatile and can be altered to reflect the species of *Pelargonium* you are using. Try pairing lemon-scented with rosehip jam (seen here), rose-scented leaves with plum butter, or peppermint-scented with apple butter. Your flour choice and the color of the fruit will affect the finished appearance, with whole grains and darker fruits creating less visual contrast between the leaves and the crust. Whole wheat flour provides a heartiness that will round out an otherwise sweet cake.

3 egg whites
170 g unsalted butter, softened
100 g granulated sugar
170 g jam or fruit butter
100 g 100% hydration starter
145 g all-purpose flour

1 tsp. baking soda

¼ tsp. sea salt

Approximately 15–20 scented geranium leaves

Preheat your oven to 375°F and grease your pan. In a medium bowl, beat the egg whites with a handheld mixer on high until stiff but not dry and set aside. In a separate large bowl, beat together the butter and sugar until fluffy, about 5 minutes. (Do not skimp on either of these steps that create air bubbles, which help to lighten the batter.) Add the jam to the creamed butter and sugar and beat until combined. Stir in the starter and then fold in the beaten egg whites. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt. With a large wooden spoon, fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients just until hydrated, being careful not to overmix. A few remaining lumps are OK.

Line the bottom of your greased pan with 3 to 4 scented geranium leaves. Carefully spoon about a quarter of the batter into the pan. Using the batter to hold the leaves in place, position leaves along the sides of the pan. Fill with more batter and edge with more leaves if there is room. Decorate the top with 4–5 leaves and bake for 40 minutes. Turn the heat down to 325°F and bake for another 12 to 15 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center tests clean. Cool in the pan for 15 to 20 minutes then turn out onto a cooling rack. This loaf will keep well for up to 1 week.

Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler

Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler

Makes one 10½-inch round cobbler

Everyone has a preferred version of what cobbler should be, often based on geography and cultural influences. Growing up in the South, for me this meant copious amounts of fresh fruit with a fast and easy biscuit-like topping. Accordingly, this recipe puts fruit forward but includes plenty of sweet biscuit dough on top to soak up the juices from the cobbler and any ice cream that might make an appearance as well. The lilac honey and sugar set this recipe apart, but regular, noninfused sweeteners can be used as well.

For the Fruit Filling:

1020 g fresh blueberries
85 g Lilac Sugar (this page)
15 g arrowroot powder or tapioca flour
1½ tsp. lemon zest
25 g lemon juice
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. salt
60 g Lilac Honey (this page)

For the Biscuit Topping:

240 g all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
115 g cold unsalted butter, cut into chunks
40 g whole milk
200 g 100% hydration starter

½ tsp. vanilla extract
40 g Lilac Sugar (this page)

Prepare the Filling: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Toss the berries with the sugar in your round baking dish. Sprinkle the arrowroot over the berries, along with the lemon zest and juice, cinnamon, and salt. Drizzle with the honey. Toss again until all the ingredients evenly coat the blueberries.

Prepare the Topping: In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and soda, and salt. With your fingers, rub the butter into the flour until a crumbly texture is achieved. In a separate medium bowl, combine the milk, starter, and vanilla and beat with a fork until thoroughly combined. Pour into the flour mixture and gently mix with a wooden spoon until combined. Work quickly, and do not overmix the batter or your biscuit topping will not be light and fluffy. With your hands, drop large globs onto the fruit mixture, leaving gaps in between. Sprinkle with the sugar.

Place a lined sheet pan on the oven rack and put the cobbler dish into the oven, on top of the pan. Bake for 30 minutes, or until the filling is bubbling and thick and the biscuit topping is a deep golden brown. Serve warm with your favorite vanilla ice cream.

Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies

Makes ten 3 × 5-inch pies

This recipe starts with making preserves, although the sugar content is much lower than what is required to keep for longer than a few weeks in the refrigerator. Enveloped in a rich chocolate-rye crust and balanced with the tang of a goat cheese icing, these are a much more delicious version of the packaged, overly sweet tarts from my childhood.

For the Filling:

0.5 kg (1 lb.) fresh cherries, pitted
65 g granulated sugar
30 g fresh lemon juice
1 Tbsp. arrowroot powder

For the Crust:

325 g rye flour, sifted
125 g cocoa powder
70 g granulated sugar
¾ tsp. sea salt
285 g cold unsalted butter, cut into chunks
150 g 100% hydration starter
30 g vodka, ice cold

For the Egg Wash:

1 large egg yolk, beaten
Dash of cream

For the Icing:

80 g fresh goat cheese
50 g powdered sugar
20 g heavy cream
½ tsp. vanilla extract

Make the Filling: Prepare the filling up to 1 week ahead. Remove the pits from the cherries using a cherry pitter or your thumb. Coarsely chop the cherries, with some large chunks remaining, and place in a heavy bottomed pan over medium-low heat. Stir frequently to prevent them from sticking to the bottom and burning. After several minutes, the cherries will release their juices. Continue cooking until the cherries visibly soften, about 12 to 14 minutes. Add the sugar and lemon juice and cook for 5 to 6 minutes longer, until the liquids start to thicken. Sprinkle the arrowroot over the mixture and stir continuously until it is thick enough to coat the spoon, about 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Prepare the Crust: In a medium bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flour, cocoa, sugar, and salt. Cut or pulse in the butter until coarse crumbs are visible. Add the starter and vodka and mix until the dough begins to clump. Test by squeezing it with your fingers to see if it holds together, adding ½ Tbsp. more vodka at a time if necessary. Turn out the dough on a floured surface and divide into two, forming thick rectangles. The dark dough will be marbled with butter. Don’t worry: this effect will contribute to the flakiness of the crust! Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 12 hours.

Assemble the Hand-Pies: Preheat your oven to 400°F and remove the dough from the fridge. Roll each rectangle out to ⅛-inch thickness on a well-floured surface, each matching the other in size, about 10 × 15 inches. Trim off any uneven edges and cut each rectangle into 5 equal-sized rectangles, then cut in half again. There should be a total of 20 dough rectangles, 10 from each original rectangle. Using your dough scraper, transfer 10 pieces to a lined baking sheet. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and cream to make an egg wash. Spoon 2 Tbsp. of the cherry filling onto each piece of dough on the sheet, spreading it to ¼ inch from the edges. Brush the bare edges with the egg wash and place the remaining

rectangles on top. Using a fork, press the edges to seal and prick the tops to vent.

Bake the Hand-Pies: Bake for 16 to 18 minutes, until the edges are firm and the kitchen is fragrant. Cool on a wire rack until ready to frost.

Prepare the Icing: While the pies are cooling, crumble the goat cheese into a medium bowl. Sprinkle with the powdered sugar, heavy cream, and vanilla. With a handheld mixer, beat until smooth. Cover with plastic and store in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Once the pies are completely cooled, spread the tops generously with icing. If not eaten straight away, these keep well in the refrigerator for up to 1 day, and the icing will set nicely when cold.

Chocolate Blackberry Sprouted Quinoa Cake

Chocolate Blackberry Sprouted Quinoa Cake

Makes one 9-inch double-layer cake

In order to access quinoa's bounty of nutrition, it is important to remove the soapy anti-nutrients, called saponins, that are naturally present. These protective substances can be found in many cereals, pseudo-cereals, and legumes, and they help to defend the seeds against predators by dissolving the cellular walls of their gut. In order to protect your own intestinal lining when consuming these otherwise nutritious foods, first thoroughly rinse the grain before cooking. When doing so, you will know the process is complete when the rinse water is clear.

You may simply use rinsed and cooked quinoa in this recipe, but there is an additional precooking treatment that will further safeguard the tummy and also unlock more nutritive compounds: sprout it! Quinoa is one of the easiest edible seeds to germinate, requiring much less time and coddling than wheat berries, for example. Once the sprouted quinoa is cooked and combined with heaps of chocolate, you will have a rich, high-protein cake that tastes more decadent than it really is!

For the Cake:

170 g dry quinoa (any variety)
260 g water
170 g panela, grated
115 g unsalted butter
115 g unsweetened chocolate
100 g 100% hydration starter

4 large eggs
45 g cocoa powder
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt

For the Cream Cheese Frosting:
225 g cream cheese, softened
50 g powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
½ tsp. almond extract
185 g heavy cream
25 g maple syrup

Add-ins:
55 g cacao nibs
455 g fresh blackberries

Sprout the Quinoa: Begin 1 to 2 days before you are to make the cake. Thoroughly rinse and then soak the dry grain in plenty of water for 1 hour. Drain and spread onto a sheet pan. Cover with a wet towel and place in a warm location for 1 to 2 days, stirring occasionally and making sure the towel is still moist. Once the quinoa grains show an extended radicle, they are ready to cook. Place in a saucepan with the water, cover, and cook until all the water is absorbed. Cool completely.

Make the Cake: Preheat your oven to 350°F and line two cake pans with lightly greased and floured parchment paper. Place the panela, butter, and chocolate into a saucepan or bain-marie and heat over low heat, stirring frequently, until the butter and chocolate are completely melted and the mixture is smooth. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Beat in the starter and eggs with a fork. Place the cooked quinoa in a medium bowl and sift the cocoa and baking soda over the top. Add the salt and stir to combine. Add the chocolate mixture and stir until a thick batter forms. Divide the batter between the two cake pans and bake for 25 to 27 minutes,

rotating halfway through. The cakes will be done when they begin to pull away from the sides of the pan and a toothpick tests clean. Allow to rest on a wire rack for 7 to 10 minutes then turn out to cool.

Prepare the Frosting: In a medium bowl, beat together the cream cheese and powdered sugar. Add the extracts, cream, and maple syrup and beat until smooth. When the cake is completely cooled, place one layer on a plate and add a layer of frosting. Sprinkle with some of the cacao nibs and a layer of fresh blackberries. Place the second cake layer on top and apply the rest of the frosting to the top and sides. Decorate with the remaining cacao nibs and blackberries. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Peach and Lavender Crumb Muffins

Peach and Lavender Crumb Muffins

Makes 8 large 2 × 3-inch muffins

These whole-grain muffins were born out of a love for stone fruit and lavender, a pairing perfect for the height of summer. Lightly floral, with a delicate flavor and a soft and fluffy crumb, they are perfect with tea or as a portable breakfast.

For the Crumb Topping:

70 g barley flour
25 g granulated sugar
45 g unsalted butter
65 g pecans, chopped

For the Muffins:

2 Tbsp. dried lavender
135 g barley flour
135 g all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. sea salt
1½ tsp. lemon zest
100 g granulated sugar
115 g unsalted butter, softened
1 egg
40 g lavender blossom honey
1 tsp. vanilla extract
200 g 100% hydration starter
285 g whole milk

225 g fresh peaches

Preheat your oven to 400°F and lightly grease eight large paper baking cups. To make the crumb topping, whisk together the barley flour and sugar in a small bowl. Cut in the butter and work with your fingers until you have a cornmeal texture. Toss in the pecans and set aside.

Pound the lavender with a mortar and pestle until crushed. Whisk together with the flours, baking powder and soda, and salt in a small bowl. In a separate medium bowl, mash the lemon zest with the sugar using the back of a spoon to release the oils. Add the butter and beat using a handheld mixer until pale and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Beat in the egg, honey, and vanilla. Add the starter and beat in with a fork and then stir in the milk. Add the flour mixture in three batches, stirring after each addition just until combined. Fold in the peaches. Spoon the batter into the muffin cups, filling to about ½ inch from the rim, and top with the crumb topping. Bake for 24 to 26 minutes, or until a toothpick tests clean. Cool on a wire rack. These are best served the same day.

Fennel, Orange, and Almond Biscotti

Fennel, Orange, and Almond Biscotti

Makes 7 to 8 dozen

Bronze fennel foliage is a known food source for swallowtail caterpillars, and the umbelliferous blooms hum with insect activity as the heat of summer gains momentum. This display of nature's biodiversity is mesmerizing, and it also signals that something delicious is happening. One year I followed this cue and harvested fennel pollen myself. I was surprised by the mildly citrus and licorice quality it revealed on my tongue.

Ever since then, I have cultivated my love for fennel. I harvest the seed while it is still young for this recipe. If you do not have fennel, aniseed will also work well here.

4 large eggs
150 g granulated sugar
1 tsp. salt
100 g 100% hydration starter
½ Tbsp. whole fresh fennel seeds or dried aniseeds
90 g candied orange peel, chopped
260 g whole raw almonds
400 g whole wheat flour
70 g medium cornmeal

Preheat your oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl, beat the eggs, sugar, and salt with a handheld mixer on high until the mixture thickens. Add the starter, seeds, orange peel, and almonds and stir with a large wooden spoon to combine. Add the flour and cornmeal in several batches, stirring after each addition until hydrated.

Wet your hands to discourage the sticky dough from clinging. Form the dough into two 9½ × 3½-inch logs and place on a parchment-lined sheet pan. Bake, rotating halfway through, for 25 to 30 minutes, until the tops are golden brown. Remove from the oven and cool the pan on a wire rack for 20 to 25 minutes, allowing the crumb to set. With a sharp bread knife, cut the logs into thin wafers about ⅛ inch thick. Place the slices on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake until the edges become a golden color, another 18 to 22 minutes depending on the thickness. These will store well for several weeks if kept in an airtight container.

***Foeniculum vulgare 'Purpureum'* (Bronze fennel)**

When I began working as the Curator of the Cranford Rose Collection at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, I wanted to allay the assumption that roses required copious amounts of sprays and fertilizers in order to be display-worthy. The collection drew hundreds of thousands of people every year to enjoy the fragrant June show, and I wanted to ensure the collection was bursting each spring with scented blooms and clean foliage.

One of my initial approaches was to incorporate other plants besides the roses to add diversity and seasonal longevity, and to help improve the soil. I sought annual and perennial selections that would attract beneficial insects, balancing the harmful ones so often associated with monocultures. Among the elderflower, chamomile, and other cottage garden plants, I sowed bronze fennel. Little did I realize what a weedy monster it would become! Every year since, I have contemplated its demise as it spreads its copious seedlings. But the original planting has survived the shovel. Besides its feathery soft presence and broody dark foliage, it has earned its keep by the diversity of insects it attracts.

Lahmacun

Makes six 8½-inch flatbreads

This much-adored Turkish street food resembles pizza, but unlike pizza its thin crust takes a backseat to the topping—here a spicy mixture of lamb, tomatoes, and herbs. This nontraditional dough is high in whole-grain flour with flax added for texture and nutrition. Rolled up like a flute with lettuce, fresh mint, and parsley, you can eat it without topping, or stuff it with grilled tomatoes or eggplant. Garnish with freshly squeezed lemon, sumac, and a dab of yogurt sauce to feel like you are wandering the streets of Istanbul.

For the Dough:

100 g 100% hydration starter, refreshed (fed)
290 g water
255 g whole wheat flour
140 g bread flour
15 g ground flaxseed
8 g sea salt
1 Tbsp. whole flaxseed

For the Topping:

30 g extra-virgin olive oil
55 g tomato paste
115 g onion, coarsely chopped
5 garlic cloves
1 Tbsp. deseeded and coarsely chopped jalapeño
½ tsp. paprika
1 tsp. ground cumin
¾ tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. red pepper flakes
1 tsp. sea salt
1 lb. (0.5 kg) ground lamb
120 g fresh tomato, finely chopped
1½ Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley

Make the Dough: Mix the starter and water together in a medium bowl to form a slurry. Add the flours and ground flaxseed and mix until hydrated and no lumps remain. Cover with plastic and allow to autolyze for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the salt and whole flaxseeds over the dough and mix until completely incorporated. Cover with plastic and allow to bulk ferment for 3 to 4 hours, stretching and folding every 30 to 45 minutes. When the dough is puffy and almost doubled in size, cover and retard in the refrigerator at least 8 hours.

Prepare the Topping: Prepare the lamb mixture at least 8 hours before baking to guarantee a maximum infusion of flavor. In the bowl of a blender or food processor, place the oil, tomato paste, onion, garlic, jalapeño, spices, and salt. Blend on high into a thick sauce. Transfer to a medium bowl and mix in the ground lamb. Stir in the fresh tomato and parsley, cover, and refrigerate overnight.

Assemble the Flatbreads: Remove the dough from the fridge 1 hour before you are ready to make the flatbreads. Preheat a hearthstone in your oven to 450°F. Divide the dough into 6 balls and cover with plastic for a 5-minute bench rest. With a well-floured rolling pin, roll a ball into a thin 8-inch disk. Place it onto a piece of parchment paper and top with a generous layer of the lamb topping, spreading to the edges. Repeat with the remaining dough and topping.

Slide the piece of parchment paper with a flatbread onto the preheated hearthstone and bake until the dough is golden and the lamb is cooked, about 8 to 10 minutes. Repeat with the remaining flatbreads and serve warm or at room temperature.

Raspberry Tequila Lime Tartlets

Raspberry Tequila Lime Tartlets

Makes six 3½-inch tartlets

The flavors of this predictable but classic pairing are only improved by the addition of a little tequila. Use one that is fragrant, smooth, and complex, such as a reposado or añejo. If making this is in colder months, try substituting with cranberries and orange for a bright seasonal dessert.

For the Pâte Sucrée:

115 g all-purpose flour
½ Tbsp. granulated sugar
¼ tsp. salt
60 g unsalted butter
50 g 100% hydration starter
40–50 g ice-cold vodka or water

For the Raspberry Sauce:

340 g fresh raspberries
15 g fresh lime juice
50 g granulated sugar
30 g mild honey
25 g tequila

For the Key Lime Cheese Filling:

150 g cream cheese, softened
25 g granulated sugar
Yolk of 1 large egg
15 g fresh Key lime juice
25 g tequila

½ Tbsp. lime zest

For the Garnish:

Raspberry sauce (see below)

Whipped cream

Fresh mint and edible flowers

Prepare the Pâte Sucrée: In a medium bowl or food processor, whisk together or pulse to combine the flour, sugar, and salt. Cut or pulse in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add the starter and vodka and mix or pulse until the dough comes together. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead once or twice. Pat into a flat circle and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day. Alternatively, this may be made in advance and kept in the freezer for up to 2 weeks.

Make the Raspberry Sauce: Combine the raspberries and lime juice in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and cook over medium-low flame until the berries release their juices. Add the sugar and honey and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens, about 20 minutes. Add the tequila and cook for 2 to 3 minutes more. Allow to cool then strain through a sieve, careful to push all of the pulp through.

Make the Filling: In a large bowl, beat together the cream cheese and sugar. Beat in the egg yolk until well combined. Add the lime juice, tequila, and lime zest and beat until well mixed.

Assemble the Tart: Preheat your oven to 350°F. Remove the crust from the fridge and allow to soften at room temperature, about 5 minutes. Roll out the crust on a lightly floured surface. Place your tartlet forms face down into the dough and cut the crust about ½ inch from the rim. Press the dough gently into the form, trimming off any excess. Rework the dough if necessary to fill all the forms. Blind bake for 13 to 15 minutes, until the edges are firm but not brown. Remove from the oven and cool on a wire rack.

Spoon the lime filling into the cooled tartlet shells.

Bake on the center rack for 30 minutes, until the middle is set and the filling begins to color slightly. Cool on a wire rack. Garnish with the raspberry sauce, whipped cream, mint, and edible fresh flowers. Will keep well for up to 1 week if covered and refrigerated.

Resources

Good Flour Ground Conscientiously

Anson Mills, Columbia, SC
www.ansonmills.com
803-467-4122

Blue Bird Grain Farms, Winthrop, WA
www.bluebirdgrainfarms.com
509-996-3526 or 888-232-0331

Carolina Ground, Asheville, NC
www.carolinaground.com

Community Grains, Oakland, CA
www.communitygrains.com
510-547-3737

Farmer-Ground Flour via Cayuga Pure Organics, Brooktondale, NY
www.cporganics.com
607-793-0085

Grist and Toll, Los Angeles, CA
www.gristandtoll.com
626-441-7400

Hayden Flour Mills, Phoenix, AZ
www.haydenflourmills.com
480-557-0031

Louismill, Louisville, KY
www.louismill.com
502-439-0528

The Mill, San Francisco, CA
www.themillsf.com
415-345-1953

Wild Hive Community Grain Project, Clinton Corners, NY
www.wildhivefarm.com
845-266-0660

Fancy Kitchen and Garden Tools

Breadtopia
www.breadtopia.com
800-469-7989

Brook Farm General Store
www.brookfarmgeneralstore.com

Kaufman Mercantile
http://kaufmann-mercantile.com

Provisions by Food52
https://food52.com/provisions

Terrain
www.shopterrain.com

Spice Up Your Life

Dual Specialty Store, New York, NY
www.dualspecialty.com
212-979-6045

Kalustyan's, New York, NY
www.kalustyans.com
800-352-3451

Sahadi's, Brooklyn, NY
www.sahadis.com

Grow Your Own

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
www.rareseeds.com

Chiltern Seeds
www.chilternseeds.co.uk

Fedco Seeds
www.fedcoseeds.com

Jelitto Perennial Seeds
www.jelitto.com

J.L. Hudson, Seedsman
www.jlhudsonseeds.com

Johnny's Seeds
www.johnnyseeds.com

Richters Herb Specialists
www.richters.com

Seed Savers Exchange
www.seedsavers.org

Select Seeds
www.selectseeds.com

Supplemental Reading

Josey Baker, *Josey Baker Bread: Get Baking—Make Awesome Bread—Share the Loaves* (Chronicle, 2014).

Dan Barber, *The Third Plate: Field Notes on the Future of Food* (Penguin, 2014).

Jeffrey Hamelman, *Bread: A Baker's Book of Techniques and Recipes*, 2nd ed. (Wiley, 2012).

Sandor Ellix Katz, *The Art of Fermentation: An In-Depth Exploration of Essential Concepts and Processes from Around the World* (Chelsea Green, 2012).

Andy King and Jackie King, *Baking by Hand: Make the Best Artisanal Breads and Pastries Better without a Mixer* (Page Street, 2013)

Peter Reinhart, *The Bread Baker's Apprentice: Mastering the Art of Extraordinary Bread* (Ten Speed Press, 2001).

Chad Robertson, *Tartine Book No. 3: Modern, Ancient, Classic, Whole* (Chronicle, 2013).

Nancy Silverman, *Nancy Silverman's Breads from the La Brea Bakery: Breads for the Connoisseur* (Villard, 1996).

Index

Note: Index entries from the print edition of this book have been included for use as search terms. They can be located by using the search feature of your e-book reader.

A

ale bread, nettle and
all-purpose flour
    about
    Sonoran wheat
almonds
    Fennel, Orange, and Almond Biscotti
    Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain
amaranth muffins, plum and
Anson Mills, South Carolina
Antimo Caputo “00” flour
Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust
apples
    Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust
    choosing
Apricot and Pistachio Swirls
Apricot and Tarragon Scones
apricots
    Apricot and Pistachio Swirls
    Apricot and Tarragon Scones
autolyzation (resting period)
Autumn Upside-Down Cake

B

babka
baguettes, baking
Baked Carrot and Pineapple
    Doughnuts with Tamarind
    Icing
baker’s math
baking. *See also* equipment;
    techniques
    blind baking, prebaking
    mindful, aware
    precision needed for
    and season-related variability
    Silpat mats
    timing, variable
    uneven, avoiding
    using a Dutch oven or clay baker
    using a hearthstone
baking pans
Banana (roasted) Marble Cake
bannetons (*brotforms*)
barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)
basil
    Chive Blossom and Basil Butter
    Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins
batards
    baking
    Brooklyn Sourdough
    equipment for
    shaping
beef, for Braised Oxtail Tacos in
    Flour Tortillas with Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw

Beet Bread
beets
Beet Bread
beet puree
Chocolate and Port Wine Beetroot Cake
common beet (*Beta vulgaris*)
topping for breadsticks
bench rest technique
berries, fresh
Chocolate Blackberry Sprouted Quinoa Cake
Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle
Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler
Strawberry and Cardamom Dutch Baby
Berry, Wendell
biscotti, fennel, orange, and almond
biscuits. *See also* muffins
Buttermilk Biscuits
cornbread biscuit topping for casseroles
black cumin (*Nigella sativa*)
Bleu Cheese and Walnut Crackers
blind baking, prebaking
Blood Orange Tartlets with
Japanese Sweet Potato Cream
blueberry cobbler, lilac-infused
Blue Corn and Caramelized Onion Loaf
botanical Latin, using
boules
baking
Brooklyn Sourdough
shaping
bowl covers

bowl scrapers
box graters
Braised Oxtail Tacos in Flour
    Tortillas with Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw
bread flour
    components
    organic, in starter
    strong, hydration
    substitutions
breads
    Beet Bread
    Blue Corn and Caramelized Onion Loaf
    Brooklyn Sourdough
    Butternut Squash and Cherry Bread
    Candied Bacon Cornbread
    Cranberry and Poppy Semolina Bread
    Drunken Fig Bread
    Friendship Loaf
    Garlic and *Nigella* Naan
    Harvest Bread with Hard Sauce
    Honeyed Spelt and Oat Levain
    Le Pain du Soleil
    Lumberjane Loaf
    Nettle and Ale Bread
    Pane di Farro
    Ploughman’s Loaf
    Roasted Chestnut Bread
    Saffron Buns
    Saraguro Cheese Bread
    Savory Zucchini and Green Olive Loaf
    Seeded Turmeric and Leek Levain

Smoky Chili Bread
Sweet Potato Levain
Walnut and Bleu Cheese Fougasse
Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain
breadsticks, vegetable
bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare 'Purpureum'*)
Brooklyn Sourdough
buckwheat, buckwheat flour
buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*)
Buckwheat Crepes
buckwheat honey
Dark Chocolate Buckwheat Cookies
in Friendship Loaf
Pear and Buckwheat Cake
Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust
sprouting
when to use
Buckwheat Crepes
bulk rise
Bundt pans
buns, saffron
burdock (*Arctium lappa*)
Burdock Burgers
Burdock Burgers
butter
in biscuits
compound butters
Buttermilk Biscuits
Butternut Squash and Cherry Bread

C

cakes. *See also* pies
Autumn Upside-Down Cake
Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka
Chocolate and Port Wine Beetroot Cake
Chocolate Blackberry Sprouted Quinoa Cake
Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake
Coconut and Lychee Cupcakes
Geranium-Scented Cake
Gingerbread Cake
for Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle
Honey Rose Cake
Pear and Buckwheat Cake
Persimmon Spice Cake
Roasted Banana Marble Cake
Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust
Strawberry Coffee Cake
Candied Bacon Cornbread
Candied Citrus Shortbread
Candied Cranberries
caramelizing onions
cardamom Dutch baby, strawberry and
carrots
Baked Carrot and Pineapple Doughnuts with Tamarind Icing
Braised Oxtail Tacos in Flour Tortillas with Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw
topping for breadsticks
cast-iron skillet
cheese
Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust
Bleu Cheese and Walnut Crackers
Fiddlehead Pizza
Jalapeño Cheese Bread

Robiola, in Pizza con Funghi Selvaggi
Root Vegetable Casserole
Saraguro Cheese Bread
Tomato and Lebany Galette
Walnut and Bleu Cheese Fougasse
cherries
Butternut Squash and Cherry Bread
Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies
chestnuts
chestnut honey
Chinese chestnut (*Castanea mollissima*)
Roasted Chestnut Bread
chicken, organic
Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas
Child, Julia
Chili Citrus Butter
chilies
Chili Citrus Butter
Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake
Corn and Zucchini Griddle Cakes with Sweet Chili Sauce
Jalapeño Cheese Bread
Smoky Chili Bread
Chinese chestnut (*Castanea mollissima*)
Chive Blossom and Basil Butter
chives
Chive Blossom and Basil Butter
Dandelion and Chive Popovers
chocolate
Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka
Chocolate and Port Wine Beetroot Cake
Chocolate Blackberry Sprouted Quinoa Cake

Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies
Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake
Chocolate Ganache
Dark Chocolate Buckwheat Cookies
chutney
cinnamon babka, chocolate, currant, and
Citrus medica
citrus peel, candied
Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream
Candied Citrus Shortbread
clay baker. *See also* Dutch oven
cobbler, lilac-infused blueberry
coconut
Coconut and Lychee Cupcakes
Coconut Tahini Bars
Coconut and Lychee Cupcakes
Coconut Tahini Bars
coffee cake, strawberry
common beet (*Beta vulgaris*)
common pear (*Pyrus communis*)
common wheat (*Triticum aestivum*)
community supported agriculture (CSA) membership
compost tea
Compound Butters
cookie cutters
cookies
Dark Chocolate Buckwheat Cookies
Lemon Madeleines
Nutbutter Cookies
Quince and Walnut Tea Cookies
cooling racks

Corn and Zucchini Griddle Cakes with Sweet Chili Sauce
cornbread, candied bacon
cornbread biscuit topping
couches
couronne
    baking
    Le Pain du Soleil
crackers
    Bleu Cheese and Walnut Crackers
    Parchment Crackers
    Sprouted Emmer Crisps
cranberries
    Cranberry and Poppy Semolina Bread
    Persimmon Spice Cake
Cranberry and Poppy Semolina Bread
Crocus sativus, saffron from
Crumb Topping
crusts, bread
    baking techniques
    cornbread
    and Red Fife flour
    and salt
    techniques for
crusts, for pies
    Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust
    Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream
    Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies
    duck fat in
    Lemon Curd Tart
    moistening
    prebaking

Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust
Vernal Tart in a Hazelnut Crust
curd
for Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle
lemon
orange
currants
Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka
in Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust

D

dairy, organic
Dandelion and Chive Popovers
Dark Chocolate Buckwheat Cookies
Delice des Cremiers with Truffles
digestive problems, benefits of sourdough
digital scale
dough build
doughnuts
Baked Carrot and Pineapple Doughnuts with Tamarind Icing
baked vs. fried
Parsley and Herb Doughnuts
dough scrapers
dressing, for Spring Tartlets
Drunken Fig Bread
duck fat, in pie crusts
Dutch babies
Dutch oven, clay baker

E

eggs
Elderflower Cordial

elderflowers
    Elderflower Cordial
    Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle
emmer berries
    Sprouted Emmer Crisps
    sprouting
empanadas, chicken, purple potato, and olive
epis
    Blue Corn and Caramelized Onion Loaf
    Brooklyn Sourdough
equipment
    baking pans
    bannetons and couches
    cast-iron skillets
    cooling racks
    digital scales
    dough and bowl scrapers
    Dutch ovens, clay bakers
    food processors
    hearthstones
    heatproof gloves
    lames, razors or scissors
    microplanes, graters, mandolins
    mixing bowls/measurement tools
    mortars and pestles or spice grinders
    parchment paper
    peels
    plastic or linen bowl covers
    rolling pins
    sheet pans
    spray bottles, misters

strainers
thermometers
tins, Bundts, pie pans, cookie cutters
towels

F

farmer’s markets
farro flour
about
Pane di Farro
Pizza con Funghi Selvaggi
fats and oils
feeding/refreshing starter
fennel
bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare ‘Purpureum’*)
Fennel, Orange, and Almond Biscotti
Fennel, Orange, and Almond Biscotti
fermentation
defined
during springtime
timing needs
Fiddlehead Pizza
figs
Drunken Fig Bread
Savory Fig Crostata
flatbreads
Fiddlehead Pizza
Garlic and *Nigella* Naan
Floral Honey Butter
flours, in starters. *See also* all-purpose flour; bread flour; *and specific types of flour*

flowers, edible
foccacia, pomegranate and zaatar-spiced
food processors
foraging
fougasse
    baking
    equipment for
    Walnut and Bleu Cheese Fougasse
Friendship Loaf
fruits, dried
    Butternut Squash and Cherry Bread
    Coconut Tahini Bars
    Cranberry and Poppy Semolina Bread
    Lumberjane Loaf
    Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie
fruits, fresh
    Baked Carrot and Pineapple Doughnuts with Tamarind Icing
    Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies
    Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake
    Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle
    in hand-pies
    Peach and Lavender Crumb Muffins
    Pear and Buckwheat Cake
    Persimmon Spice Cake
    Plum and Amaranth Muffins
    Pomegranate and Zaatar-Spiced Focaccia
    Raspberry Tequila Lime Tartlets
    Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust

G

gardening, all-season, benefits

garlic
    Garlic and *Nigella* Naan
    Tomato and Lebany Galette
Garlic and *Nigella* Naan
garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
Garlic Mustard Pesto
Geranium-Scented Cake
geraniums (*Pelargonium spp.*)
ginger
    Gingerbread Cake
    wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
Gingerbread Cake
Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle
grains and flours
    sources
    types
grapefruit, in Chili Citrus Butter
green garlic (*Allium spp.*)
griddle cakes, corn and zucchini, with sweet chili sauce

H

Hamelman, Jeffrey
hand mixing
hands, role in baking
Harvest Bread with Hard Sauce
hazelnut tart crust
hearthstones
heatproof gloves
herbs
    Apricot and Tarragon Scones
    in Compound Butters

fresh, as pantry items
Parchment Crackers
Parsley and Herb Doughnuts
Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain
high-extraction wheat
honey
Floral Honey Butter
Honeyed Spelt and Oat Levain
Honey Rose Cake
as an ingredient
Lilac Honey
Honeyed Spelt and Oat Levain
Honey Rose Cake
hummus, scarlet runner bean
hydration
baker’s math for
defined
and dough build
gauging using hands
medium, working with
and salt
for starter

I

icing/frosting
Baked Carrot and Pineapple Doughnuts with Tamarind Icing
Chocolate and Port Wine Beetroot Cake
Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies
Coconut and Lychee Cupcakes
Cream Cheese Frosting
Indian Chutney Bialys

Indian long pepper (*Piper longum*)
ingredients
    organic, importance of
    understanding origins
    using botanical Latin
inspired living

J

Jalapeño Cheese Bread
jam
    Quince and Walnut Tea Cookies
    Strawberry Coffee Cake
Japanese sweet potato cream

K

kale scones, savory
kamut flour
    about
    Apricot and Tarragon Scones
    Honey Rose Cake
    Plum and Amaranth Muffins
Khorasan wheat
kohlrabi-carrot slaw, braised oxtail tacos in flour tortillas with
kumquat cake, chocolate chipotle

L

Lactobacilli (bacteria species)
Lahmacun
lame
leaven (*levain*) build
lebany galette, tomato and
Lebovitz, David

leek levain, seeded turmeric and
Lemon Curd Tart
Lemon Madeleines
lemons
    Lemon Curd Tart
    Lemon Madeleines
Le Pain du Soleil
Lilac Honey
Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler
lilac species (*Syringa spp.*)
Lilac Sugar
lilacs
    Lilac Honey
    Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler
    Lilac Sugar
lime tartlets, raspberry tequila
locally sourced foods
Lumberjane Loaf
lychee nuts (*Litchi chinensis*)

M

mandolin
maple syrup
masa flour
measurement tools
meat, organic
meat-containing dishes
    Braised Oxtail Tacos in Flour Tortillas with Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw
    Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas
    Lahmacun
    Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie

mesh strainers, fine
Meyer lemon curd
microbes
    in compost tea
    in sourdough
microplanes
mixing bowls
mixing by hand
Moroccan spice mixes
mortar and pestle
Mother (starter)
    recipe
    refreshing/feeding
muffins
    Peach and Lavender Crumb Muffins
    Plum and Amaranth Muffins
    Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins
My Paris Kitchen (Lebovitz)

N

Native Fine Blue Masa Flour
Nettle and Ale Bread
Nutbutter Cookies
nuts. *See also specific nut varieties* in pantry, choosing and storing
    toasting

O

oat levain, honeyed spelt and
olives
    Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas
    Savory Zucchini and Green Olive Loaf
onions

Blue Corn and Caramelized Onion Loaf
Pomegranate and Zaatar-Spiced Focaccia
oranges
Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream
Fennel, Orange, and Almond Biscotti
organic ingredients, importance of

P

Pain du Soleil
pancakes
Buckwheat Crepes
Corn and Zucchini Griddle Cakes with Sweet Chili Sauce
Salsify Latkes
Strawberry and Cardamom Dutch Baby
Pane di Farro
pantry items
dairy and eggs
edible flowers
fats and oils
grains and flours
herbs
nuts and seeds
produce and meat
salt
spices
sugar and other sweeteners
using organic ingredients
vodka
water
Parchment Crackers
parchment paper

parsley
    Parsley and Herb Doughnuts
    topping for breadsticks
Parsley and Herb Doughnuts
Parsnip Applesauce
pastry flour
Pâte Sucrée
Peach and Lavender Crumb Muffins
Pear and Buckwheat Cake
pears
    Autumn Upside-Down Cake
    common pear (*Pyrus communis*)
    Pear and Buckwheat Cake
peels
Persimmon Spice Cake
persimmons (*Diospyros spp.*)
    Autumn Upside-Down Cake
    Persimmon Spice Cake
pesto, garlic mustard
phytates
pies. *See also* cakes
    Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust
    Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream
    Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies
    Lemon Curd Tart
    Raspberry Tequila Lime Tartlets
    Spring Tartlets
    Vernal Tart in a Hazelnut Crust
pineapple doughnuts, baked carrot and, with tamarind icing
pistachio swirls, apricot and
pizzas

Fiddlehead Pizza
Lahmacun
Pizza con Funghi Selvaggi
Ploughman’s Loaf
Plum and Amaranth Muffins
Pomegranate and Zaatar-Spiced Focaccia
popovers, dandelion and chive
poppy semolina bread, cranberry and
Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie
potatoes, in Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas
poultry, organic
preshaping technique
produce and meat, organic
proofed loaves
proofing baskets. *See* bannetons (*brotforms*)
puff pastry
Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas
Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie
Spring Tartlets

Q

Quince and Walnut Tea Cookies
quinoa (sprouted) cake, chocolate blackberry

R

raspberries
Raspberry Sauce
Raspberry Tequila Lime Tartlets
Raspberry Sauce
Raspberry Tequila Lime Tartlets
razors
Red Fife wheat

refreshing or feeding starters
retardation
rhubarb, in Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie
rice, wild (*Zizania* sp.)
    Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain
Roasted Banana Marble Cake
Roasted Chestnut Bread
Robiola cheese
rolling pins
Root Vegetable Casserole
Rosa x damascena
rose (*Rosa spp.*)
rose water whipped cream
rye, sprouting

S

Saffron Buns
Salsify Latkes
salsify root (*Tragopogon spp.*)
salt
saponins, removing from quinoa
Saraguro Cheese Bread
savories
    Apricot and Tarragon Scones
    Bleu Cheese and Walnut Crackers
    Braised Oxtail Tacos in Flour Tortillas with Kohlrabi-Carrot Slaw
    Burdock Burgers
    Buttermilk Biscuits
    Chicken, Purple Potato, and Olive Empanadas
    Corn and Zucchini Griddle Cakes with Sweet Chili Sauce
    Dandelion and Chive Popovers

Fiddlehead Pizza
Garlic Mustard Pesto
Indian Chutney Bialys
Jalapeño Cheese Bread
Parchment Crackers
Pizza con Funghi Selvaggi
Pomegranate and Zaatar-Spiced Focaccia
Pork and Rhubarb Pot Pie
Root Vegetable Casserole
Salsify Latkes
Savory Fig Crostata
Savory Kale Scones
Scarlet Runner Bean Hummus
Spring Tartlets
Sprouted Emmer Crisps
Sun-Dried Tomato Shortbreads
Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins
Tomato and Lebany Galette
Vegetable Breadsticks
Vernal Tart in Hazelnut Crust
Savory Fig Crostata
Savory Kale Scones
Savory Zucchini and Green Olive Loaf
Scarlet Runner Bean Hummus
scarlet runner beans (*Phaseolus coccineus*)
Scarlet Runner Bean Hummus
scissors
scones
Apricot and Tarragon Scones
Savory Kale Scones
seasonal ingredients

Seeded Turmeric and Leek Levain
seeds
in pantry, choosing and storing
toasting
topping for breadsticks
semolina flour
Cranberry and Poppy Semolina Bread
Honey Rose Cake
Parchment Crackers
to prevent sticking
shaping techniques
sheet pans
shortbread
Candied Citrus Shortbread
Sun-Dried Tomato Shortbreads
Silpat baking mat
slap-and-fold technique
slaw, kohlrabi-carrot
Smoky Chili Bread
Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust
Sonoran wheat flour
sourdough
benefits of eating
equipment needs
making starter
pantry items
as slow process, scheduling
techniques
terminology
true, differing opinions about
using garden ingredients

spelt, honeyed, and oat levain
spice grinders
spices, buying
spray bottles, misters
Spring Tartlets
Sprouted Emmer Crisps
sprouting
    benefits of
    emmer berries
    quinoa
squash, butternut, and cherry bread
starter
    fed vs. unfed
    impacts of seasonal changes
    making your own Mother
    pastry and batters using, mixing
    refreshing/feeding
    using different flours
    stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*)
strawberries
    Strawberry and Cardamom Dutch Baby
    Strawberry Coffee Cake
Strawberry and Cardamom Dutch Baby
Strawberry Coffee Cake
sugar and other sweeteners. *See also specific sweeteners*
    about
    Lilac Sugar
Sun-Dried Tomato Shortbreads
sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), sunflower seeds
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
Sweet Chili Sauce

Sweet Potato Levain
sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*)
    Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream
    Sweet Potato Levain
Sweet Potato Levain
sweets
    Apple Hand-Pies with Cheddar Crust
    Apricot and Pistachio Swirls
    Autumn Upside-Down Cake
    Baked Carrot and Pineapple Doughnuts with Tamarind Icing
    Blood Orange Tartlets with Japanese Sweet Potato Cream
    Buckwheat Crepes
    Butternut Squash and Cherry Bread
    Candied Citrus Shortbread
    Chocolate, Currant, and Cinnamon Babka
    Chocolate and Port Wine Beetroot Cake
    Chocolate Blackberry Sprouted Quinoa Cake
    Chocolate Cherry Hand-Pies
    Chocolate Chipotle Kumquat Cake
    Chocolate Ganache
    Coconut and Lychee Cupcakes
    Coconut Tahini Bars
    Dark Chocolate Buckwheat Cookies
    Elderflower Cordial
    Fennel, Orange, and Almond Biscotti
    Geranium-Scented Cake
    Gingerbread Cake
    Gooseberry and Elderflower Trifle
    Honey Rose Cake
    Lahmacun
    Lemon Curd Tart

Lemon Madeleines
Lilac-Infused Blueberry Cobbler
Nutbutter Cookies
Parsley and Herb Doughnuts
Peach and Lavender Crumb Muffins
Pear and Buckwheat Cake
Persimmon Spice Cake
Plum and Amaranth Muffins
Quince and Walnut Tea Cookies
Raspberry Tequila Lime Tartlets
Roasted Banana Marble Cake
Solstice Pie with Buckwheat Crust
Strawberry and Cardamom Dutch Baby
Strawberry Coffee Cake
syrup, for Honey Rose Cake

T

tahini bars, coconut
tarragon scones, apricot and
tarts. *See* pies
techniques
bench rest
final shaping
hand mixing
mixing batters and pastry that include starters
preshaping
proofed (proved) loaves
shaping
slap-and-fold
turn-and-fold
using a Dutch oven

using a hearthstone
tequila lime tartlets, raspberry
thermometers
tins
Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins
Tomato and Lebany Galette
tomatoes
Sun-Dried Tomato Shortbreads
Tomato and Basil Mini Muffins
Tomato and Lebany Galette
tortillas, flour, braised oxtail tacos in
towels
turmeric, seeded, and leek levain
turn-and-fold technique

V

Vegetable Breadsticks
Vernal Tart in a Hazelnut Crust
vodka, in pie crusts

W

Walnut and Bleu Cheese Fougasse
Walnut Pâte Brisée
walnuts
Bleu Cheese and Walnut Crackers
Quince and Walnut Tea Cookies
Tomato and Lebany Galette
Walnut and Bleu Cheese Fougasse
Walnut Pâte Brisée
water
weather conditions, importance of
wheat, sprouting

wheats (*Triticum spp.*)
Whitman, Walt
whole wheat flour
wild crafting
wild garlic, ramps (*Allium tricoccum*)
wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain
wild rice (*Zizania* sp.)
    Wild Rice, Herb, and Almond Levain
wild yeasts (*Saccharomyces*)
wine, red, for Drunken Fig Bread

Z

zaatar spice mix
zucchini
    Corn and Zucchini Griddle Cakes with Sweet Chili Sauce
    Savory Zucchini and Green Olive Loaf

About the Author

Sarah Owens grew up in Clinton, Tennessee, and received a bachelor of arts with an emphasis in ceramics from Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky. She is the owner of BK17 Bakery (BK17Bakery.com), an artisan microbakery that began in Brooklyn, New York. After receiving a certificate from the New York Botanical Garden's School of Professional Horticulture, she spent six years as curator of the historic Cranford Rose Garden and the Rose Arc Pool at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Prior to joining BBG, Sarah worked at many gardens in the New York City area, including those of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and the Battery Conservancy. Whether it be clay, soil, or dough, Sarah seems to always have her hands busily working a malleable medium.

About the Photographer

Ngoc Minh Ngo is a self-taught photographer who studied landscape design at Columbia University. She has written and photographed for such international publications as *Elle Decoration UK, Martha Stewart Living, House Beautiful*, and *Garden Design.* She is the author of *Bringing Nature Home* (Rizzoli, 2012), which has been described as “quite possibly the most beautiful (and accessible) floral design book.” Her work explores the intrinsic beauty of plants and nature and celebrates the creative endeavors of crafters, artists, and designers of all kinds.

Her website is www.ngocminhngo.com.

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